

# THE MONTH

APRIL 1950

A DECADE IN RETROSPECT—3

F. A. VOIGT

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VINCENT TURNER

THE LIVING ROCK

ELIZABETH SEWELL

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MS

## News about Books

**M**EREDITHIANS, arise! In the sub-title to his novel *THE LEADEN CUPID* or *The Egoist Revisited* (7s. 6d.), Basil Creighton not only acknowledges his debt to the Master but pays him the compliment of adding Sir Willoughby Patterne to the high company of Dr. Faustus, Don Juan, Harlequin, Malvolio, Tartuffe and others, characters who frequently make their re-appearance in literature, often in the very situations for which they are already famous. But sub-titles apart, *THE LEADEN CUPID* is an entertaining novel on its own account: the period 1900, before cars were general, and the setting a pleasant well-appointed country-house, not too large, Palladian in character, situated it would appear about two hours by train from Euston. We publish the book this month; Laurence Scarfe provides designs for the jacket and the title-page.

**T**HE Unicorn Press Edition of the works of Oscar Wilde now approaches completion, and all titles are immediately available. In *FOUR PLAYS* (12s. 6d.), now in its seventh printing, Wilde's modern theatre, from *Lady Windermere's Fan* of 1892 to *The Importance of Being Earnest* of 1895—three short years—is presented in a single volume for the first time. The book has a frontispiece portrait, and an appendix giving the dates and complete castes of the original productions. Here is a list of the other titles: *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* (8s. 6d.), *SALOME* (4s. 6d.), *LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME* and *A HOUSE OF POMEGRANATES* (8s. 6d. each), *INTENTIONS* (7s. 6d.), *DE PROFUNDIS* (5s.), and *THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL* (4s. 6d.). We hope to publish the poems in the Autumn.

**T**HE steady daily orders for Miss Sackville-West's *THE HEIR* (6s.) have almost absorbed the current edition and we shall probably have to reprint again. *THE GREEN CARNATION* (8s. 6d.) also sells persistently. It was Elizabeth Bowen, reviewing this latter, who said: "It could not be wittier: the 'nineties, one realises, really had something."

**D**This news-letter is issued by The Richards Press Ltd. and The Unicorn Press, whose address is No. 8 Charles II Street, St. James's Square, London, S.W.1, WHI 4239.

# A DECADE IN RETROSPECT<sup>1</sup>

3

F. A. VOIGT

**W**E have often asked ourselves—and others—what the last Ten Years have meant and done. Much, though not all, they have done is plain enough, but have they *meant* anything? What if they were meaningless? Having lived through them, we think we have lived through “a period of history.” But is any one span of years a “period of history” any more than any other span of years? And does history mean anything? If so, what does it mean?

What if the Ten Years had been a period of untroubled peace? If so, might they not have meant and done more than the troubled years we have known? Are we to assume that years of calm *must* mean less than years of storm? The Ten Years were, no doubt, exceptional. But were they so because they meant so much or because they meant so little?

The Editor of THE MONTH has asked a few of us to relate what these years have meant and done to each of us, personally. I shall try to answer personally, and not as a “student of affairs” or “political observer” or “contemporary historian.” I am not asked to explain “the present age” or to say what the Ten Years have meant or done to “humanity” or “civilization.” All I have to do is to answer a question, a personal question.

But do not “humanity” and “civilization” concern me personally? They do indeed, but not as much, perhaps, as I sometimes imagine. Most of us feel, or profess to feel, personal concern over these high matters, more, perhaps, than is good for us—and for them. Perhaps it would have been better if we had left them alone. Must we assume, as many of us do assume, that “humanity” needs us, or that we ought to “do something” for “peace” or for

<sup>1</sup> Contributors to this series are freely expressing their own views, which are not necessarily endorsed by THE MONTH.—Editor.

"civilization"? It is my belief that if no attempt had been made to "organize peace" after the First World War, there would have been no Second World War.

Civilization is inconceivable without artifice, and yet it is not artificial. It defies ultimate analysis. The laws that govern the rise and fall of civilizations have never been discovered. And as civilization transcends science, we can assume that they are undiscoverable, for the higher can never be explained in terms of the lower. We must beware lest our efforts to promote civilization interfere with inscrutable laws. Those "Charters" and those "Declarations of Human Rights" fill me with misgiving. They seem to me inimical not only to civilization, but also—and this is a much graver matter—to religion. They reveal a *superbia* for which retribution will surely come. I cannot regard them as harmless or as mere rhetoric. They strike me as positively evil. They not only increase the danger of war. They *falsify* the peace.

We are told that the hydrogen bomb may "destroy civilization." But must we not, if we are honest, recognize that the bomb may help to save our particular civilization by defending it against another? If it does so, we shall boast, as we have done before, that we have saved civilization as such, and not merely our own, because we shall have fought for the "principles" of the various "Charters" and "Declarations" and, generally, "for freedom," as though freedom and civilization were the same, and as though freedom had never abounded amongst barbaric tribes and the highest civilization had not flourished under stern despotisms.

It may be that we have seen the end of wars for a generation or more, that the bomb will never be used, and that there are many years of affluent tranquillity before us. Can we be sure that civilization will not perish in such years? And perhaps we shall not even know that it has perished, but will boast that we were never so civilized!

It may be that the Third World War is upon us, that the bomb will be used, and that the destruction will be greater than any ever known. But does it follow that our civilization will perish? May it not be that our civilization will be reborn—and perhaps be more exclusively ours?

It seems to me that the question: Will civilization perish or be saved? is of little more than speculative interest. We err when we



suppose that civilization is the *ne plus ultra*. It does not transcend good and evil, and concern for its future may be a sign of unconcern for weightier matters. Civilized man is not "better" than primitive man—he is only more civilized. The splendour of even the highest civilization is deeply and indelibly stained with evil. The most urgent question today is not "What is to become of civilization?" but "What is to become of man?" And by man, I do not mean "humanity," or "the common man" (who is the object of so much flattery nowadays), or even the uncommon man. Least of all do I mean "collective man." I mean man, created in God's image.

Satan is a formless spirit and nothing can be created in his image. Nevertheless, it is his eternal purpose to transform God's image into his own. But as his image is formless, he can only transform form into formlessness. He is the *Diabolos*, a word which defies exact translation into English. The *Diabolos* is he who throws into confusion (German affords a precise rendering—*der Durcheinanderwerfer*). The menace to civilization is incidental and, ultimately, perhaps of small account. The menace is to man. The Ten Years were not years of clear purpose, they were years of the utmost perplexity and confusion. Men were able to make war, but they were unable to make peace. It is easy to make war because war can be organized. Peace cannot be organized because it is organic. Man was never so helpless as he was in those Ten Years, not even in "primitive" times. Those years must make us doubt whether primitive man was as helpless as he is said to be. The open confusion of those years was preceded by confusion of the mind. Outward confusions begin in the mind and Babylon is but the work of the Babylonian heart.

Alas, the Ten Years are not the end of confusion. We may be, indeed, I fear we are, at the beginning of worse confusion, war or no war. "Collective man" is formless. Absolute freedom is the end of freedom, for the free will is left with nothing more to will.

## II

When we speak of the Ten Years as "eventful," what do we mean? What is an event? Was the Battle of Marathon an event? It may have saved the greatest secular glory ever achieved by



man, but we cannot be sure. We do not know whether the Greeks would not have prevailed against the Persians in the end, even if the Battle had been lost. And while we know that they were civilized (if they were not, the word "civilization" has no meaning), we are not entitled to assume that the Persians were "barbarians" (to the Greeks, the word "barbarian" did not mean what it means to us). In itself, the Battle of Marathon was like countless other battles. If it was an "event," it was so because it was hallowed by what it saved.

On that September afternoon in 1940, I was looking at the clear blue sky from my window in Holborn. The German squadrons came over like schools of small silver fish in mathematical formation. I saw the smoke go up from the London docks. And then I saw the German squadrons come back, all broken.

I felt no excitement or exhilaration. I was aware only of a deep inner calm. Rationally I knew that this was but one battle of many in a long and uncertain war. I was always sure that the war could be won, though rationally I knew that it might be lost. No reasoning could affect my serene conviction that what I beheld was the turning-point of the war. Not only did my serenity endure for many days, it never left me altogether, not even when, after the Conference at Teheran, I realized that the peace would be lost. It is possible to be at the same time deeply disquieted and deeply serene. The effect upon myself of the battle I witnessed was like the effect of some great work of art which, until life's end, imposes serenity whenever it is remembered. No great work of art which has once been experienced can ever be quite forgotten. And every great work of art is in itself serene, however tempestuous the subject may be.

Was this opening engagement in the Battle of Britain an event? It seemed so to me. Twice again in those ten years did I experience a similar serenity in the presence of significant events, as again they seemed to me.

I have come to dislike all talk about Europe, even when I talk about it myself, not because Europe means little to me, but because it means so much. It is *my* Europe, my larger country. For nothing in the world would I be an exile—not even in America, although I admire America deeply and cannot find words to express my gratitude for all she has done to save *my*

Europe. I would rather, far rather, spend the rest of my life in England than in another country, but as long as I am in Europe, whether it be France or Italy, or Spain or Germany, I shall not feel that I am an exile (were I in those unhappy regions that are under Communist domination, I should feel myself not an exile, but a prisoner, and should probably be one in the physical as well as spiritual sense of the word). I have known many exiles and count some of them amongst my greatest friends, and to me it seems that their misfortune surpasses all other misfortunes. I know that some of them do not think so—or do not seem to think so—and have found a sort of happiness. But only a *sort*! I would gladly visit America, but I would not find happiness there. I would rather be unhappy in England than happy in America. And if I have one wish stronger than all others, it is that our Europe be restored within her frontiers as they were before the war. Europe is my world, and for the rest of the world I care little. If this be considered prejudicial or narrow I do not mind at all. In any case, it is a *postjudicium* as well as a *praejudicium*, and I have more regard for him who thinks everything of his own village and nothing of the outside world than for him who thinks everything of the wide world and nothing of his own village.

I felt the Battle of Britain to be Britain's Battle indeed, and not Europe's. It *was* Europe's, of course, but I am not speaking "in general terms" or "objectively," but *personally*. When I saw those German squadrons come and go, I did not think of Europe but only of England.

In the early part of 1947 I visited Athens for the second time since the war. I greatly feared that the Battle of Greece would be lost. There were moments when I could not govern my despair which was made unendurable by a sense of shame, for we were about to abandon Greece to her fate (and I knew exactly what that fate would be). Then, in March, Mr. Truman announced that America would intervene. It was as though he had turned on a light that suddenly irradiated all the world's darkness. As the Battle of Greece developed, I again felt the serenity I had felt in London. If I could not live in England, Greece would be the country of my choice, because of the people, of what they are today and what they were in ancient times. The spirit of those times is still upon the land. It has a density, a warmth, a heat almost; that infuses a deeper fire into the fire of the jewelled

landscape. It has the more than tangible reality which spirit has. It is no ghost that can be exorcized!

In the last of the Ten Years, I witnessed the Battle of Berlin, so grey and silent and yet so great. It was in Germany that the modern crisis smoked and smouldered, glowed, and then burst into an incandescence which set the world on fire. Unless I am much mistaken, it is in Germany alone that the crisis has burnt itself out. There is a cold desolation of the German mind as there is of the German cities. The abomination has gone and the desolation is not the desolation of despair. Whether there will be a rebirth in Germany, I do not know. All I know is that a rebirth may be possible and my hope, though a faint one, is that from Germany a cold breath may blow over Europe and those demonologies, which we falsely call "ideologies," will be challenged by the realism of a land where the demons have been stricken and exorcised, a land where neither politics, nor science, nor any secular belief, but theology is in the ascendant. To me this is the principal lesson of the Ten Years; that there is no realism that is not theological.

Berlin, today, is "the front"—without a weapon or a trench. When I saw how that front is being held by the Berliners, I felt the same serenity I had felt twice before in those Ten Years.

### III

When I say that we live in an uneventful age, I seem to contradict myself. Perhaps I do contradict myself. But I am not concerned with consistency, I am but relating what the Ten Years meant and did to me—and that may well be replete with inconsistency.

No age is eventless but not all are eventful. Not a day, not an hour, not a minute is eventless, but a period of time, long or short, may be uneventful. What may appear eventful to me, may appear uneventful to the future historian. Not that this concerns me at all. I do not care "what history will say."

We have witnessed events which we believed to be such because we believed them to be turning-points. But were they nothing more? Is not every great event itself an eventful efflores-

cence of the human genius, whether for good or for ill or for both? The Renaissance was such an event. So was the Reformation. So was the Counter-Reformation. Such events endure. They are always with us, we are always concerned with them, whether they repel us or fill us with admiration. I, personally, admire and distrust the Renaissance and hate and admire the Reformation. I am grateful for the Counter-Reformation which, in my belief, justified the Reformation. If we use the word event in this sense—not as indicating a point in time, but a plenitude or a consummation in time—then our age is indeed uneventful.

Why?

Man was created with free will and the first exercise of man's free will was the Fall. We can never be altogether sure whether an event is an event, because our human judgment is always fallible. But there are three events that are not under our judgment. The first of these is the Fall. The Fall was not a point in time, a turning-point. It was the beginning of time (for Paradise is timeless). It made time—and history—possible. Nor was it something that was done and then no longer done, for we are always falling. History is nothing other than the continued exercise of fallen man's free will.

The second event is the Crucifixion. The third is the Judgment which is the end of time. These three events are the only certainties in this world. Although the first was at the beginning of time, although the second was in the midst of time, and although the third is at the end of time, all are *now*. We are still falling, Christ is still being crucified, and the Judgment is always coming—not on the point of coming, not "round the corner," not coming, say, in a hundred or in a thousand years, but upon us now, as it was upon our first parents. We are always under judgment.

It is in relation to these three events that all other events are ultimately to be judged. To say that man is the measure of all things is as absurd as it is presumptuous, for a measure cannot be its own measure. The three events are the measure of all things.

How are we with that measure to measure the Ten Years?

Freedom is a necessity. That without it we can do nothing is clear. It is not so clear, but far more important, that without it we can *be* nothing. Far worse than the tyrannies that prevent us from doing what we want to do are the tyrannies that prevent us from being what we are.

Doing what? Good—and evil! All movements, causes, philosophies that have proclaimed freedom since history began have culminated in the Ten Years. Freedom engenders more freedom. But it also engenders unfreedom. Around us we see both freedom and unfreedom, and both in extreme form. There was never so much freedom and never so much unfreedom as there are today!

The Fall was not a falling *down*, but a falling *from*. History is not God-made. It is man-made. The "Finger of Providence" is not discernible in history. History has no meaning except the negative meaning that it is the exercise of man's free will, that its every stage is to be judged as a stage in the Fall, in the falling *from*. All history is the record of this falling *from*. If man is mindful, or is made mindful by the Churches, of the Fall, the Crucifixion, and the Judgment, he can withstand the overwhelming preponderance of evil although he can never by his own effort eradicate evil.

Man, when deeply aware of ineradicable evil—and only then—will be in the presence of God and Nature—of Nature, stricken, but bearing in all her aspects the marks of her original perfection.

It is no accident that our ever-weakening apprehension of the Three Events is accompanied by our evident and ever-growing divorce from Nature. We are in danger of losing, if we have not already lost, our union with Nature because, having lost the recollection of the Fall, we have also lost the recollection of Paradise, which was Nature in her original form—and will be so again.

Of this, even the Pagans had an apprehension. Goethe was no Christian. But he could write:

*Was kann ein Mensch im Leben mehr gewinnen,  
Als dass sich Gott-Natur ihm offenbare?*

Had Nietzsche, with all the integrity of his audacious intellect, pursued his Nihilist thought to its ultimate conclusion, he would not only have declared that the death of God is the greatest event of the modern age, he would have declared the death of Nature an event no less great.

So immeasurable is the freedom of man's will that he can even be as though God were not, and as though Nature were an enemy to be "conquered." Never before did he boast of his "conquest of nature" as he boasts in our own time!



Having, through the freedom of his will, arrived at the end of God and Nature, where does man stand? Where will he go next? There will be nowhere to go! He will be wholly free at last. But from what? And for what? From everything and for nothing! His will will remain free, but there will be nothing left for it to will. His freedom will have lost its meaning, for everything will have lost its meaning.

The prelude to that state, towards which we are moving, is the chaos of the mind. It is one of the greatest achievements of the *Diabolos*, that with the free will of man to work upon (he has nothing else to work upon or to work with), he has organized disorder and has persuaded man that ever-growing chaos is cosmos.

I shall now speak personally (as, after all, I have been asked to speak), and briefly—of my own country and my own Church, the Church of England. It may be that I shall exaggerate or draw a caricature. In any case I shall not speak as a "detached observer."

Whether the Ten Years have made me better or worse, I do not know, but they have made me see, or think I see, the present age in a certain manner. Do I see what I believe or believe what I see? Others will, perhaps, say that what I believe is heresy or secular error and that what I see is a false image or a phantom. However that may be, what I do see—"subjectively" or "objectively" (or both)—is the preponderance of evil and the ascendancy of Antichrist.

The ultimate character of every age is determined not by its art or science, not by its philosophy, not by its social or political order, not by its "civilization." All these, and the character of the age itself, are determined by its religion. Beliefs are decisive. Beliefs made the Ten Years what they were. Catastrophic beliefs engendered catastrophe.

What are those beliefs in the present, the eleventh year, 1950?

These are the articles of the contemporary creed:

Religion without God; Christianity without Christ; Christ without Antichrist; Heaven without Hell; works without faith; a God of Love but not of Wrath; a Church that can bless but cannot curse.

We believe that God, almighty and incarnate, is but a benevolent Spirit; that Satan does not exist; that Christ was the author of an ethical code, but not the Godhead crucified. We

profess to believe that He existed, for agnosticism is no longer the fashion.

We believe that the Gospels must conform with our time and not our time with the Gospels.

We believe that man is by nature good and can, by his own efforts, attain perfection, although what "perfection" is we do not know and hardly even care. We believe—if "believe" is not too strong a word for fashionable opinions—that there can be crime without sin and no sin without crime.

We believe in order without hierarchy, in progress without direction, in freedom as an end and not a means, in justice as a means and not an end. We believe that justice can be qualified, that there is political justice, social justice, economic justice, or historical justice, or any justice other than justice.

All articles of our creed can be summed up in one phrase: "the Christian ethic."

The "Christian ethic" is the Antichrist of the Western world. It is the most insidious and formidable corruption that ever afflicted that world. And England and her Church are its principal strongholds.

The "Christian ethic" is preached from innumerable Anglican pulpits. It pervades art, letters and science. It is proclaimed daily by the Press and is propagated by wireless. It is the "philosophy" of the Pacifists.

It is the Gate through which all can pass and the Way all can tread. Wide is that Gate and broad is that Way!

The Cross is not planted on that Way! Wherever that Way leads—to freedom, to equality, to democracy, to peace, to "civilization"—it leads away from the Cross.

That is what the Ten Years have meant and done! They have brought us through the wide Gate and along the broad Way. They have enthroned Antichrist in one of his modes over the Western world and in another of his modes over the Empire that extends from the Elbe to the Yellow Sea!

Has there, since the Fall, been one year when Satan has had more cause for satisfaction than he has in this, the eleventh year, when he can look back at his work during the Ten Years?

And yet, something shines out from the confusion of those years, something that bears the names of London, Athens, Berlin, something of that "plain heroic magnitude of mind" and of that



great humility which is the mark of the *anima naturaliter christiana*, something that will—perhaps, perhaps—pierce the murky future into the future that lies beyond and be hallowed, or re-hallowed in that future.

In what is our hope? In the famine and the thirst! The danger—and, in a last analysis, the only danger—is that the hunger and the thirst will be stilled with the frothy pabulum of the “Christian ethic,” and that the people will be full and yet not fed. But there are signs, even in England and even in her Church, that there is distrust of the prophets that prophesy falsely and that the people no longer “love to have it so.” In the famine, in the gnawing hunger and the burning thirst is our only hope: “*not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.*”

## GHOSTS IN MACHINES

By

VINCENT TURNER

**T**ODAY'S manner of philosophizing is apt to perplex a man not born and bred in it. Plato compared philosophical thinking—and it was analysis that he had in mind—to the hunting a quarry to its lair. Today the cries and the tally-hos are clearly audible and the hunt is plainly moving; but to the detached spectator it is not at all clear what sort of hunt it is, or whether it is what it makes itself out to be, and there seems to be no lair, or none that can be localized. This is comment and not yet criticism, for the apparent elusiveness of what is going on may betoken only unfamiliarity with the sport.

There are, I think, two staple ingredients in the philosophical temper now dominant. Neither is altogether novel. The first, frequently enough, is an emphasis on analysis in contrast to

speculation. A philosopher's business is, or is only, to clarify what the ordinary man knows all the time; knows, that is, as he goes about the day-to-day business of living, doing his job, dealing with his fellows, coming to decisions, and so on. Of course, in his reflective moments the ordinary man may, and usually will, misconstrue what he quite well knows; he makes a bad analytical philosopher and for one reason or another—a faulty or wrong-headed tradition, or the confusion and incompetence that come from lack of training and discipline—can be relied on to proffer such an analysis of the language he uses as perverts what he means by this language. "The philosophical arguments which constitute this book," says Professor Ryle in the introduction to his recent *The Concept of Mind*,<sup>1</sup> "are intended not to increase what we know about minds, but to rectify the logical geography of the knowledge which we already possess. . . . Many people can talk sense with concepts but cannot talk sense about them; they know by practice how to operate with concepts, anyhow inside familiar fields, but they cannot state the logical regulations governing their use." But it is to be expected, and it always happens, that in the learning to talk sense about concepts the concepts themselves will find themselves undergoing a reinterpretation and perhaps a sea change, and that what is talked with them, even in familiar fields, will be revised to correct the nonsense and save the sense. This, presumably, is the reason why many contemporary philosophers, in spite of the initial modesty of their intentions, end by offering an account of the nature of things that is no less outlandish than the metaphysical systems by which they have been outraged, and would with difficulty be recognized by the ordinary man as primarily a clarification of what all the time he himself had more or less in his mind in his non-philosophical moments.

The second ingredient is more difficult still to isolate and describe with any brevity. May a diagnosis be ventured? The professed purpose of metaphysicians has rarely, if ever, been simply to speculate; it has always been to clarify ordinary experiences, to exhibit what experiences presuppose or imply, and the rest. They have not always stuck to their professions. Moreover, in their task of clarifying and "explaining," both metaphysical and anti-metaphysical philosophers have too often been unaware

<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson's University Library (Senior Series), 12s. 6d.

of what they were about. "In any explanation you start off with certain phenomena and you transform them into something else and say: 'This is what really happens.' There is something about this second state that satisfies the demands of your intellect, which makes you say: 'This is perfectly clear.' You have in your mind a model of what is clear and comprehensible, and the process of explanation consists in expressing all the phenomena of nature in the terms of this model." Hulme's racy diagnosis fits the case-history of much theorizing; though it is by no means only the last three centuries that it is relevant to, it has become most obviously relevant since the seventeenth century. I quote it because we may, I think, unearth from it a clue to the kind of sensitiveness that may well lie behind some of the positivism that is a characteristic of today's philosophical climate. Description according to a model is a "myth." Myths have done good service in the past, as each succeeds its predecessor; in their youth, as Professor Ryle says, they are often of enormous value. But in the present it is, naturally, humiliating to think that one may be cluttering one's mind with yet another. Is it reluctance to commit oneself to a story with a manifest pattern and shape that explains why much contemporary work in philosophy runs through one's fingers when one tries to get a grip? Or is it just unfamiliarity? A myth is a story, but not, of course, as Professor Ryle insists, a fairy story. "It is the presentation of facts belonging to one category in the idioms appropriate to another. To explode a myth is accordingly not to deny the facts but to re-allocate them." It is well said, though every constructor of a counter-myth and the craziest of metaphysicians would have said as much. Perhaps some part of the elusiveness of *The Concept of Mind* may be owing to the systematic elusiveness of the "categories" to which the "facts" are being re-allocated. It remains mysterious, too, what is being done when some of the facts are being re-allocated. *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.* Philosophers in the past, as I have said, were not always clear about what they were doing.

The myth that Professor Ryle harries with indefatigable vitality is the Cartesian myth, the story that "with deliberate abusiveness" he calls "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine." He describes it with admirable clarity and his habitual courtesy. His version may be quarrelled with by Cartesian scholars, as I

believe it is. To stretch it to cover Platonic and Aristotelian and Augustinian psychology, as he seems to do, is to offer a caricature. None the less, it is a fair statement of the sort of view that, with various minor modifications, has been taken for granted, in principle, by theorists since Descartes. It is responsible for many stock problems, and for much strange language: philosophers who have enjoyed much esteem have been anguished by the capital "problem" of our knowledge of "other minds," and they have written blithely of "the causation of physical events by mental events." Roughly, it is the story that every human being has, or is, both a body and a mind harnessed together in such a fashion that each tenants a world of its own. Human bodies are in space, observable by external observers, subject to the mechanical laws that govern other bodies in space; minds are not. "A person therefore lives through two collateral histories, one consisting of what happens in and to his body, the other consisting of what happens in and to his mind. The first is public, the second is private. The events in the first history are events in the physical world, those in the second are events in the mental world." Of the workings of minds, therefore, there can be no observation from outside; there is only argument to what they are by analogy with what such and such bodily actions and states would, in the observer's own case, signalize in the way of corresponding or causative mental states—an argument that Professor Ryle has no difficulty in disposing of. There is, however, for the owner of the mind, a privileged access to his own mind; mental states and processes are intrinsically phosphorescent—"the inner life is a stream of consciousness of such a sort that it would be absurd to suggest that the mind whose life is that stream might be unaware of what is passing down it"; for "body and mind" the words "matter and consciousness" are indeed commonly substituted—and on these mental states we can, moreover, exercise an infallible introspection. Infallible it is commonly considered to be. "A mind's reports of its own affairs have a certainty superior to the best that is possessed by its reports of matters in the physical world. Sense-perceptions can, but consciousness and introspection cannot, be mistaken or confused."

This, then, is part of Professor Ryle's statement of the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine. His hope is to prove it entirely

false, and false in principle; for it is, he considers, one big mistake of a special kind, a category mistake. The mistake is like that made by the visitor to Oxford who might say that he had seen the Colleges and the Bodleian and the Registry and the rest, but that no one had yet shown him the University. For it is a category mistake to suppose that the University, which is the way in which these bodies are organized, is itself an extra member of the class of which they are members. They and it belong to different categories.

The programme that Professor Ryle sets out is an attractive one. The Cartesian bifurcation of a man into two lives and two worlds has never been destroyed root and branch; instead, its roots have gone deep: it has infected and perplexed habits of imagination, and so hardened language about minds that it is not unknown for even religiously-minded theorists to talk about the workings of the soul in the same sort of way as they would talk about a combustion engine. (We must not, however, exaggerate this or guy Descartes for it, as, in descriptions of the divided will, the old habits of metaphor and allegory and personification show. In part, it is endemic to language.) Attractive as the programme is, sympathies are all the more sweetly wooed when this bifurcation is diagnosed as a para-mechanical myth. For it is a hypothesis natural to men who were convinced both that Galileo's methods of discovery pointed to a mechanical theory that would embrace all the physical world, and that human nature is not just a more complicated machine. The mould of the hypothesis is mechanist, so that minds are described in terms that properly belong to the categories of mechanics but are corrected, concurrently and piece-meal, to make them plausibly applicable to what is not at all a mechanism. "Minds are things," on this hypothesis, "but different sorts of things from bodies; mental processes are causes and effects, but different sorts of causes and effects from bodily movements. Somewhat as the foreigner expected the University to be an extra edifice, rather like a college but also considerably different, so the repudiators of mechanism represented minds as extra centres of causal processes, rather like machines but also considerably different from them." The problem of the freedom of the will is a pseudo-problem engendered by this sort of category mistake, for it is the problem of reconciling the mechanist language in which it is thought fit to



describe minds with the recognition that human conduct is nothing like the behaviour of machines.

It is indeed likely that Professor Ryle believes that all, or almost all, certainly the hoary, problems about minds are not problems at all, but puzzles, and puzzles that are dissipated when it is seen that they arise not from the facts but from the inappropriateness of the categories to which the facts are traditionally allocated. There is no doubt that many problems are of this nature, in theology as well as in philosophy; the theology of the Sacraments and of grace affords not a few that might be dissolved when it is seen that the assignment of the facts to the categories of Aristotelian physics is an improper allocation. But Professor Ryle is more venturesome. Minds hold no mysteries for him, I think. Where M. Marcel, for example, would discover far more than met the eye, Professor Ryle is apt to discover rather less. He is convinced that there is, in principle, no opposition, or even contrast, of matter and mind (he is not, of course, either a materialist or a mentalist); for to believe that there is a contrast is to believe that matter and mind are terms of the same logical type: "the seeming contrast of the two will be shown to be as illegitimate as would be the contrast of 'she came home in a flood of tears' and 'she came home in a sedan-chair.'"

The attempt to show it takes up the rest of his book, some three hundred pages of relentlessly sustained philosophically didactic talk. It is very good talk, fluent and clear; both its quality and its elegance are unusual; it has the accomplishment that comes of long practice. Naturally, some chapters are better than others. One of the best, though it is one that Professor Ryle is himself dissatisfied with, is a powerful criticism of the absurdity of positions that of late years have come to be thought impregnable, the positions that have directed the construction of all the family of sense-datum theories and of much current phenomenalism; the way is perhaps less clogged to the kind of realism that used to be pejoratively dubbed naïve. Other chapters, like that on the will, are just inadequate.

Of the contents of the talk and the thousands of shrewd observations that spice it, it is far from easy to give a notion that is accurate and not misleading and is brief. To plot the drift of the discussion is harder still. To declare unequivocally its cash-value is perhaps impossible. One difficulty is that of philosophical

manner, and it is perhaps linked with the reluctance to commit oneself to anything that might be construed as wearing the garb of a counter-myth that earlier I commented on. (The category mistake that vitiates the customary story of body and mind was likened, as we saw, to the mistake of putting the University into the class of which colleges are members. Professor Ryle does not think, of course, that the mind is the way in which bodily activities are organized, but neither does he ask how close is this or any other likeness. Perhaps his purpose is merely destructive.) Moreover, every employment of analogy runs the risk of turning into a category mistake, and yet analogies provide some of the most illuminating and recapitulatory devices of our language. As it is, the argument runs on, unhasting and unresting, in that variety of philosophical lecturing which consists of continuous amplification, through flank attacks and infiltrations, with endless retouching and overpainting, rather than of the development of a theme from a beginning through a middle to an end. It is conducted, besides, and happily, with vast arrays of examples all of which deserve scrutiny. They turn out to be at times wittily commonplace: "by feelings I refer to the sorts of things which people often describe as thrills, twinges, pangs, throbs, wrenches, itches, prickings, chills, glows, loads, qualms, hankerings, curdlings, sinkings, tensions, gnawings and shocks." The lists seem comprehensive enough, but a wary reader may find them selective and be tempted to draw up counter-lists.

In Professor Ryle's assault on the Ghost in the Machine there is, however, one major directive, the attempt to show that when we talk of people's emotions or moods or thoughts or mental activities "we are not referring to occult episodes of which their overt acts and utterances are effects; we are referring to those overt acts and utterances themselves." The showing of this has a negative and a positive part. Negatively, it is the attempted refutation, in the main successful, of the Cartesian category mistake, usually by a *reductio ad absurdum* that unmasks an indefinite regress. One passage may be quoted at length for the sake of illustration.

The absurd assumption made by the intellectualist legend is this, that a performance of any sort inherits all its title to intelligence from some anterior internal operation of planning what to do. Now very often we do go through such a process of planning what to do, and if



we are silly, our planning is silly, if shrewd our planning is shrewd. It is also notoriously possible for us to plan shrewdly and perform stupidly, *i.e.* to flout our precepts in our practice. By the original argument, therefore, our intellectual planning process must inherit its title to shrewdness from yet another interior process of planning to plan, and this process could in its turn be silly or shrewd. The regress is infinite, and this reduces to absurdity the theory that for an operation to be intelligent it must be steered by a prior intellectual operation. What distinguishes sensible from silly operations is not their parentage but their procedure, and this holds no less for intellectual than for practical performances. "Intelligent" cannot be defined in terms of "intellectual" or "knowing *how*" in terms of "knowing *that*"; "thinking what I am doing" does not connote "both thinking what to do and doing it." When I am doing something intelligently, *i.e.* thinking what I am doing, I am doing one thing and not two. My performance has a special procedure or manner, not special antecedents.

The conclusion is doubtless a trifle hasty, but even so the passage is a capital instance both of Professor Ryle's manner of argument and of the sort of bogey that he is insistently exorcizing from himself. There may be occasion to return to it.

The positive part of *The Concept of Mind*, in its major directive, elusive as it is to the untrained in this particular technique, may fairly, I think, be indicated by one of the author's models of what philosophical elucidation is like. It is a coy and retiring model. Indeed, there are several important, indeed crucial, concepts in this book that merit a more thorough and explicit examination than they ever get. That of "heed" is one, in spite of the space given to its exposition; those of "competence" and of "learning" and of "practice" are others, and they are not, oddly enough, investigated at all. But the model that I have in mind is the operation of unpacking, and Professor Ryle might have expounded what unpacking is, for it is an operation at which he is very adept. One example must suffice.

The mind is not a theatre of ghostly episodes; so-called mental episodes or occurrences, and processes, are usually to be recognized as in reality dispositions; and there are no more any nuclear or one-pattern dispositions than there are nuclear mental episodes—nuclear, that is, in the sense that there are allegedly self-identical mental happenings in which these dispositions are actualized. Knowing or believing something, then, is to be unpacked into

the other things that a person thinks or infers or says or does on account of the belief that he entertains. Sometimes we skirt close to the notion that what a belief or an emotion or anything "mental" is, is the variety of ways in which it is open to being tested. For instance, "certainly to believe that the ice is dangerously thin is to be unhesitant in telling oneself and others that it is thin, in acquiescing in other people's assertions to that effect, in objecting to statements to the contrary, in drawing consequences from the original proposition, and so forth. But it is also to be prone to skate warily, to shudder, to dwell in imagination on possible disasters and to warn other skaters. It is a propensity not only to make certain theoretical moves but also to make certain executive and imaginative moves, as well as to have certain feelings." What a man could do and would do in certain circumstances, were they to arise, is part of what is meant when it is said that he understands something, and the test of whether he understands is a range of performances. "It is part of the *meaning* of 'you understood it' that you could have done so and so and would have done it, if such and such, and the *test* of whether you understood it is a range of performances satisfying the apodoses of these general hypothetical statements." The performances may, of course, be intellectual ones.

Professor Ryle is both pertinacious and persevering in this unpacking. The programme was modest enough, the rectification of the logical geography of his subject (a favourite metaphor) through scrutiny of the company that his concepts keep when on their best "logical behaviour." The method is applied, successfully, to the philosophers' myth that whenever, say, we know how to do something, we know how, because of a tandem operation; as if a skilful performance were divisible into an observable physical part and a prior and in principle unobservable mental performance that was the cause of the physical effect. I do not know how many philosophers have in fact entertained such a crude image of what good craftsmanship or dancing or driving is; Professor Ryle seems to say that such was the image to which he was himself habituated, and I think that it has been all too common in the theorizing of this century. Possibly that is why his exorcisms are as vigorous as they are. But we find that they are directed at everything that is commonly alleged to make up the "inner life": emotions and feelings, inclinations and moods,

desires and motives, capacities and tendencies, consciousness and introspection (which becomes retrospection), imagining and fancying, and the rest. And always the ambition is to unpack and empty the contents of the "inner life" into doings and sayings and performances that are, in principle, publicly inspectable and appraisable. His account of the matter is not, of course, behaviourist any more than it is mechanist. It is too original to admit of a label or trade-mark (the Efficient Examiner Theory is too jocosely vague), and it baffles summary. It is equally difficult to assess, if one is to be brief and not mislead.

Part of what Professor Ryle is doing, and for the theorists perhaps the most original part, is to destroy the belief that our knowledge of other things and especially of other people, of their motives and capacities and sympathies and qualities of heart and head, is an extremely fallible and precarious construction out of tenuous data, a construction that does not merit the name of knowledge at all, whereas data of our own introspection are items of which we ourselves, though, of course, no one else, have a knowledge that is immediate and infallible and easy. This is a philosophers' story, and it is false. A man may have evidence about himself that another person has not (though one is a partial witness in one's own case), but the kind of knowledge that a man has about himself does not differ in any essential respects from that which he may come to have about another. Since the opposite story has been giving philosophers useless headaches for too many years, it is high time it was exploded.

Part, too, of what Professor Ryle is doing is to recommend, as a method of breaking loose from the Cartesian myth of dualism, another way of talking about the facts. These, he says, are not in question, but it is possible to talk about them less misleadingly than hitherto. (As I remarked earlier, the claim of the analyst may, and here, too, does, turn out to be less modest than at first it appeared.) There are ways and ways of talking: "the imputation of a motive for a particular action is not a causal inference to an unwitnessed event but the subsumption of an episode proposition under a law-like proposition. It is therefore analogous to the explanation of the fracture of glass by reference to its brittleness." Certainly, when a man does something out of vanity, it is inaccurately described by language that postulates an inner episode, an eruption or impulse of vanity (which, anyway,

the man would deny and may be ignorant of), that sets in motion and causes bodily episodes after the manner in which the impact of the cue sets in motion the billiard-ball; it is certainly less misleading to say that the man is disposed to behave in the way to which we apply the epithet "vain" (the "law-like proposition"), and that in this particular piece of behaviour his disposition is actualized. But of dispositions themselves Professor Ryle tells a story that is not original—its outlines are the accepted ones of the moment—but will strike the ordinary reflective reader as extremely odd. Potentialities are nothing actual, as is obvious. What are they? "To say of a sleeping man that he can read French, or of a piece of dry sugar that it is soluble in water, seems to be pretending at once to accord an attribute and to put that attribute into cold storage"; but, as he answers, to accord such an attribute is not to be asserting an extra matter of fact, an extra occurrence or process, however ghostly; we can talk significantly of dispositions because "the job of reporting matters of fact is only one of a wide range of sentence jobs." At this point, however, for all that a disposition is real, though not an actuality, we glide into talk about talk, and the description of what a disposition is (to continue with the present example) becomes a listing of the purposes and conventions of our talk. "Dispositional statements about particular things and persons are also like law statements in the fact that we use them in a partly similar way. They apply to, or they are satisfied by, the actions, reactions and states of the object; they are inference-tickets, which license us to predict, retrodict, explain and modify these actions, reactions and states." If in the past philosophers have thought of a relation between two terms as a third entity whose business it is to glue the terms together, then the sort of language that I have just quoted is a useful corrective. But is it not, in the end, just as misleading? Dispositions, like relations, are real enough. They are allocated to the wrong categories if statements about them are construed as statements about things. But so, too, are they if statements about them are so exhaustively unpacked into further statements about the sort of conduct the observation of which warrants their use, that to the common reader they turn into logical fictions whose essence is their utility, the utility they have for validating the inference-tickets or prediction-tickets, or other tickets, which none the less have to do with the real conduct

of people and not with the "logical behaviour" of concepts of that conduct.

Indeed, to appraise the logical behaviour of concepts is to declare, as Professor Ryle does didactically, how we ought to use words and phrases, if we are to talk sensibly and the least misleadingly; and how we ought to use words is decided—how? Not by mere description, nor by observing how we in fact use them when we are consistent; but in part by assigning their elusive meanings to the ways in which we could publicly test whether they were being "correctly" applied. "'Know' is a capacity verb, and a capacity verb of that special sort that is used for signifying that the person described can bring things off or get things right. 'Belief,' on the other hand, is a tendency verb and one which does not connote that anything is brought off or got right."

Now to say this may be to recommend another idiom that is useful for certain purposes. It may serve to clear our minds, as it does, of cant or some sorts of cant. Yet pure criticism or rubbish-removal is no more possible in philosophy than is pure description. Unless the criticism is haphazard, which Professor Ryle's is not, it is according to a programme or another theory. The physiognomy of the theory in this book, as I have complained, is extremely hard to bring into focus. But it is beginning to be clear, I think, that a passage like the one just instanced, although it may in the first intention be advocating another idiom, is also doing nothing so modest as was promised. This is why, against many such passages, it is always in place, and good criticism, once a reader has made himself fairly familiar with what the author is trying to do, to object that the passage concerned is extremely odd, and that the facts, for which ostensibly another language of description is being suggested, are no longer recognizable in the descriptions accorded to them in the new manner of talking. Language, fortunately, cannot be used in an exclusively "systematic" way, in the way, namely, in which, to underline certain important features, you have decided to use it; for it remains a medium of general communication. But this, no doubt, is why to say that "overt intelligent performances are not clues to the workings of minds; they are those workings" is to say one thing; whereas to say that (to take a harmless example which, in Professor Ryle's use of words, is accurate and sensible)



"the radical objection to the theory that minds must know what they are about, because mental happenings are by definition conscious or metaphorically self-luminous, is that there are no such happenings; there are no occurrences taking place in a second-status world, since there is no such status and no such world" is to say something quite different, and very misleading.

Professor Ryle, then, in his anxiety to unpack everything that might plausibly be described as belonging to an "inner life" into observable life, does himself in the long run offer a mental world just as queer as the world of the Ghost in the Machine. That it is queer is, as I have argued, not only comment but relevant criticism. He claims to be suggesting a theory that would do justice to the habitual assumptions (in their non-theorizing moments) of ordinary men, of novelists and of biographers. "In concentrating on what Jane Austen concentrated on, psychologists began to find that these were, after all, the stuff and not merely the trappings of their subjects." One hopes that they did, and that, if not, they will do it after they have assimilated Professor Ryle. But it is hardly an irrelevant flippancy to wonder whether, if Jane Austen had concentrated on the things that Professor Ryle concentrates on and had been conditioned to the picture of the workings of minds that is adumbrated in *The Concept of Mind*, she would ever have been able to write her novels at all. One wonders how, if this idiom and outlook were what they purport to be, Mr. Graham Greene, say, or Mr. Eliot would write in them their novels and poems, or how Mr. Quennell would do a biography of Ruskin.

This is not to say that in the course of his lengthy and detailed scrutiny of what is alleged to go on "in the mind" Professor Ryle does not succeed in clarifying many confusions and setting to rights many misclassifications, and still more, in throwing out many pieces of lumber that for years psychologists and epistemologists have been arranging and rearranging like so many pieces of furniture—the furniture of the spectral place they have come to call the mind and then to picture as some ghostly double of the Newtonian eighteenth-century universe. His treatment of imagination throws out another load of such lumber. It may be that some two-thirds of his clearance operations are effective. But, in the clearance, there are too many matters that are obdurate and clamant, and yet receive no attention at all.

There is the matter both of the unity and self-identity and of the development of the self, neither of which can be unpacked, without a begging of the question, into the overt or covert observable conduct, and the rest, that would verify it. There is no examination, as we should therefore expect, of the activity of intelligence as displayed in choice. Nor does Professor Ryle ask how it is that, when we are looking for the answer to a question that is worrying us, we can ever recognize the answer when we come to it as the answer that we were looking for. Nor yet does he appear ever to have been in the deplorable state in which most humans are, in the state of often not quite knowing what they are thinking until they have found how to say it, and yet of knowing it somehow all the time and of, therefore, rejecting successive attempts of laborious composition or utterance because these do not render their meaning—and do not yet discover their meaning to themselves, although, when they do, they will recognize it as what they were thinking and trying to say. But Professor Ryle is a trifle hasty or unsubtle about thinking: "saying something in this specific frame of mind (*i.e.* on purpose, with method, carefully, seriously, and on the *qui vive*), whether aloud or in one's head, *is* thinking the thought." It is not, certainly, an after-effect of thinking the thought, and it is all the thought; but neither do we just find full-fledged utterance: that which came to be articulated was there all the time and shaped its own articulation, though only in the articulation did it discover what it was. Similarly, we shall look in vain for any consideration of how, in many cases, a poet or a painter comes both to discover and to achieve what he was reaching after; though it is a topic about which some of them have provided evidence. Nor again is there any treatment of moral conflict. We have indeed been told that "at a certain stage the child discovers the trick of directing higher order acts upon his own lower order acts. Having been separately victim and author of jokes, coercions, catechisms, criticisms and mimicries in the inter-personal dealings between others and himself, he finds out how to play both roles at once. . . . He finds that he can give orders to himself with such authority that he sometimes obeys them, even when reluctant to do so"; and it is likely that this deflationary passage suggests what Professor Ryle would say about moral conflict. But it is not the language that anyone else, outside a few theorists, would use



about this matter; it is not the language of a novelist: if it were, some, like a Graham Greene, would quickly be out of work. The question of desire is, again, dismissed in a couple of lines; and probably the desire that many experience, the wanting they do not know what but will recognize when the desire is satisfied, but which in the meantime leaves them dissatisfied with every other satisfaction, would be dismissed as a portmanteau expression that masquerades as an experience, Nor, of course, can we expect any examination of contemplative prayer, or of what came about in the soul of St. John of the Cross.

The Cartesian Ghost in the Machine may well have been sent creaking and gibbering away; I think it has. But again I am not sure whether the strenuousness of Professor Ryle's unpacking of the inner into the (in principle) observable life, sympathetic though it is, has not dimmed his eyes to what he is really doing. We saw that dispositions, like vanity or the migratory habits of birds, vanished into the labyrinths of the various types of statement about the behaviour or conduct that would verify them. And it is perhaps symptomatic that, even in arguing and applying the capital and cherished distinction of "knowing how" and "knowing that," and in underlining, sensibly, that in doing something intelligently a man is doing but one thing and not two, Professor Ryle contents himself with telling us only that the performance has a special manner or procedure which merits its being described by adjectives and adverbs that belong to "that family of concepts ordinarily surnamed 'intelligence.'" It follows at once, however, that whether or how intelligence may be said to control or inform practice is a question that cannot be raised, any more than can the question of thinking's controlling its own articulation. In other words, we see that matters which, we complained, were nowhere discussed, in fact *cannot* be discussed. And to complain of their not being discussed is to beg the question. We are far indeed from the modest programme of re-allocating the facts to the categories to which they belong.

In fact, what people mean when they talk about intelligence is not being elucidated; it is being deleted. For they are being instructed what they would mean (and ought to mean) if they operated with mental concepts differently and as Professor Ryle operates. And this deletion depends on another confusion, as I have suggested, the muddling of what statements mean with the

evidence for them or the purpose for which they are made. This, I suppose, is why Professor Ryle thinks without question that a disposition (to take a familiar example) is the set of actualizations that are evidence for it and manifest it. It is the same muddle as is responsible for other important but unexamined assumptions of his.

That intelligence is the surname of a family of concepts is a view which it is surely not enough to state or assume; it needs to be argued, and defended, more directly than it is anywhere, I think, in this book. (The section on "the self" is quite unhelpful.) The characteristic method of *The Concept of Mind*, as I have said, is assiduously to unpack mental operations and dispositions and so on into the overt or covert performances and the rest which manifest them, and it is taken as read that they are identical with their manifestations, with no distinctions of any sort made or permitted. Mind is the name of the class of these performances, or so it would seem. It is a thrice-told tale. But that it is a current and, among theorists, common assumption does not justify it. It is not obvious that manifestations eat up that which they manifest, or that "to know how a tune goes is to have acquired a set of auditory expectation propensities." And this is the reason why, exorcized though a Cartesian Ghost may be, it is open to doubt whether *The Concept of Mind* either does or can touch on a single important question about body and soul. Questions about body and soul, the questions that long antedated Descartes, are questions not, indeed, about two worlds, or about two tenants, the one of a physical world, the other of a "repository which is permitted to house objects that something called 'the physical world' is forbidden to house"; they are questions about that self of which Professor Ryle discusses the manifestatory performances or dispositions or agitations or feelings or skills and the rest.

Much of the criticism that I have latterly been making will, of course, be shelved as old-fashioned or ill-informed or solemn or irrelevant by those habituated to Professor Ryle's idiom. (It will even be charged with *petitio principii* and re-introducing the Ghost.) In one respect I should agree with them. From time to time I have deliberately, but, I hope, fairly, commented on what I take it his procedure and method and many of his utterances will convey to the plain intelligent reader, for whom, among others, the publishers presumably intend the book, and who, on

this professed programme of analysis, is the arbiter. Such a reader will have difficulty in maintaining himself on the heights of linguistic rarity that possibly he ought, for the book is written in plain, and very good, English. Trusting himself to Professor Ryle's confidence in his acknowledged skill, he may, too, himself slip into the assumptions that are tacitly made, and he may fail to observe that those which underlie the unpacking of minds without residue into their operations and so on, have left the mind itself in cold storage, and with it a bundle of genuine problems about souls and their bodies. He may even, in the sweep of the talk, find himself caught up in what the author himself would confess to be the deflationary trend of the book. Still worse for him, he may come to believe that, at any rate about the mind or the soul, there are no genuine problems to worry out at all, but only puzzles generated by language, which an appropriate hygiene, the correct technique, will dissolve. He may even conclude that the intellectual problems that philosophers have had are like the neuroses that psychiatrists promise to cure; in either case suitable therapy dissipates the malaise. A conclusion like this would in fact be contrary to Professor Ryle's intentions; but it is a view which, as Mr. Isaiah Berlin was lately arguing, is part of the climate of the day.

It is not minds that think, Professor Ryle several times says, but persons. The tritest of medieval adages say just that, but we are not much forwarder. Much rubbish has been cleared away. "The Newtonian system," he writes, "is no longer the paradigm of natural science. Man need not be degraded to a machine by being denied to be a ghost in a machine. He might, after all, be a sort of animal, namely a higher mammal. There has yet to be ventured the hazardous leap to the hypothesis that perhaps he is a man." It is well said. But, after all, to say it is not yet to make a theory that elucidates what it is to be an embodied spiritual soul. It is a pity: for Professor Ryle has written a book of very great importance, for which one hopes that its effect will not too widely diverge from its professed purpose.

# THE LIVING ROCK

By

ELIZABETH SEWELL

His mother passed him in the passage, carrying a bowl of salad. The way from the kitchen to the living-room was little more than a collection of dark corners; but this evening all the light there was fell upon what she held in her hands, the big bowl piled high with lettuce leaves, uncut, the youngest on the top, still wet from the tap and shining as if they had been lacquered, with here and there a ruby tomato glowing in its glassy setting. Paul noticed the thing, so much more brightly coloured than his mother who seemed thinner and browner than ever behind it; but he turned away and became very busy taking off his satchel and hanging his coat up, thus avoiding his mother's eye. "Hurry up, Paul," she said as she went past, and he walked through the kitchen to the scullery sink where young Godfrey, who had supposedly washed, was now leaving dirty finger-strips on the roller towel behind the door.

"You'll catch it," Paul said, pulling up the sleeves of his grey pullover and scrubbing face and arms up to the elbow with the hard yellow soap.

Godfrey ignored the implications of this remark and at once burst into conversation, to show that he had other and more important things to think about.

"I say, Paul, they've started digging up that bit of the street where the gas-main went wrong, and they've got a big drill there. I asked the man on the way back from school to let me help work it, but he said no."

Paul made friendly noises from inside the roller towel, where he had found a spot that was clear of Godfrey's traces. He was not wanting to talk himself, but he knew that his brother always liked to report on the happenings of the day, or, more properly, of the afternoon, for by the evening the events of the morning had receded into dimness for that uncared-for head. Paul picked up the family hairbrush to a running commentary upon somebody's

prowess with a new football, did his own hair and gave a nominal scuff or two to Godfrey's thick mat, calling forth an occasional "Ow!", equally nominal, from the head beneath it but in no way interrupting the flow of words. They began to move in the direction of tea, Paul pulling his sleeves down as they went, Godfrey rummaging in his pockets.

"I've got something for you," he said, trying to get his fingers right to the bottom of the pocket and of the collection of oddments there. "It's rather small," he added, glancing up hopefully at his brother. "Dennis gave it me, as a swop for my set of cigarette cards—the motor-car ones."

"Is it something for the drawer upstairs?"

The small face beamed with huge approval at Paul's acumen and at having produced something so welcome. Indeed at this point, just before they left the kitchen for the dark bit under the stairs, the thing *was* produced, from the left pocket of Godfrey's shorts, and was dropped like a small shell or a tiny sweet into Paul's open palm.

"It's something that belonged to his mother, but he found it in an old green case inside their blanket chest and she let him have it. She said it had fallen out of an old ring, and nobody wanted it."

Paul looked at it. "It's a tiny intaglio," he said with pride, his former heaviness forgotten for a moment. "It's lovely."

"What's a what-you-said?"

"Can't you see?" He held the tiny object up to the light that came through the glass panels of the back door. The thing glowed orange-red suddenly, and incised on it, lighter than the surrounding stone, could be seen the figure of a man, with arms and legs pointing, dancing perhaps or flying.

"It's a stone with a man in it," Godfrey said triumphantly, his feet planted wide apart. Then he jumped, for his brother had dropped the stone so suddenly that it might have burnt him. It was Godfrey who found it, against the doormat.

"Keep it for me," Paul said, making no move to take it as it lay in the small hand. "I'll look at it properly when I come upstairs."

"Will you be early tonight?" Godfrey asked, a slight note of entreaty in his voice, "or will you have to go to Dad's meeting?"

"I don't know." Paul was half-way down the corridor by this



time. His back discouraged further remarks. Godfrey trotted after him. In the living-room they found their father seated already at the tea-table, reading something like a newspaper only smaller. It was headed *Gospel Tidings* and was in very black print on shiny paper. It always arrived on alternate Thursdays, and Dad read it over his tea before the "meeting." It was as sure a sign of fortnights slipping by as was the rearrangement of the furniture in the front room on those same alternate Thursday evenings, and, later, the arrival of the seven or eight men, mostly about Dad's own age, who came to the prayer meeting, arriving regularly about eight o'clock.

Mother by that time would have cleared away and washed up and be hidden in the kitchen with her basket of mending; she would have felt it in some way improper in herself to be present. Godfrey would be in bed in the big room upstairs, above the parlour, which the two boys shared. Paul might be doing homework on the kitchen table, or gardening; but on the last three occasions he had been asked by his father to join the meeting. He had taken it as a sign that his father recognized he was growing up, and he had gone unconcernedly, if without great enthusiasm. He had been made welcome, according to prayer meeting conventions. Everyone had shaken hands with him while they were standing about waiting for things to begin. Mr. Torton, the undertaker, who had been conducting the meeting, had held his hand a little longer than the others and had said how they rejoiced in the Lord to see a new face, and a young one too, "and perhaps our young friend will give us our Bible reading." Paul had found his father's Bible, its stiff black cover greasy with use, put into his hands.

The outside of the book was as familiar to him as the inside was. His eyes wandered round the circle of heavy faces to see if they could give him an idea of what to read, but all he noticed was the rather weedy youth from the tobacconist's near the Corn Exchange, who was sitting looking so solemn and stuffed that Paul suddenly wanted to laugh. For lack of inspiration his mind reverted to its own abiding passion. Shall it be Genesis 2, he thought, turning over the leaves and picking out the verses he had in mind: "the whole land of Havilah . . . there is bdellium and the onyx stone." No, he could not fit that into a tidy reading. (What was bdellium anyway? Not that it mattered; a lovely

name.) Instead, he switched to the other end of the book, announced Revelations 21, 19, and read to the end of the chapter. His hearers sat with large hands resting on decent dark trousers, seeing themselves miraculously transported out of the ordinariness of their daily lives in that little town into the shining streets of the New Jerusalem. But the reader was lost in what almost amounted to a catalogue of the objects of his passion. They could have the glory within the gates; he could not go beyond the particulars of this loveliness: "All manner of precious stones . . . jasper . . . sapphire . . . chalcedony . . . emerald . . . sardonyx . . . sardius . . . chrysolyte . . . beryl . . . topaz . . . chrysoprasus . . . jacinth . . . amethyst." After that came pearls and gold and glass, and then there were a few verses in which to recover from all that beauty, and that was all. When he finished, Mr. Torton had congratulated him upon his reading, and his father too, though Paul, looking at his father's face, saw plainly there that mistrust he always had for what he considered his son's inexplicable fancy for learning and reading and thinking about precious stones, or stones in general. He could not, however, say anything now.

To-night there would be more Bible reading, more prayers, maybe a hymn or two. Paul's heart moved unevenly. He saw what was coming. His father was laying down the Gospel sheet and getting to his feet. He looked at his wife fitting the crocheted tea-cosy on to the tea-pot till only the brown spout and handle stuck out of the orange wool, making it look ridiculously like a small very fat brown dog done up in a coat against the cold. He looked at his two sons, Godfrey surveying the big plate of bread and butter, and the long thin Paul leaning forward with his hands on the back of his chair.

"Say grace for us all, Paul."

"All Paul, All Paul," Godfrey muttered and giggled, to be reproved by a look from his mother. Silence fell. Heads were bowed. Then Paul spoke.

"I can't, Dad."

A car went past the house. The dish of tinned pears waited. One of Godfrey's shoes squeaked. Three faces looked at the family dissenter. The father broke the silence.

"What is the matter, son? Can't you ask God to bless our meal for us?"

"I don't believe in God any more."

Mrs. Crundall's hand moved to her mouth. The company round the table suddenly fell apart, the woman and child, alarmed, effacing themselves and leaving the floor to the two men of the family who faced one another across the teacups and the tablecloth.

"Are you having a joke with me, Paul?"

"No, Dad."

"And when, may I ask, does this unbelief date from?"

"From this afternoon. To be exact, about half-past four."

Paul had merely wanted to state the facts without concealment, but his answer seemed to be unfortunate. Mr. Crundall went very red, and Godfrey began to struggle with tears.

"Say grace, Godfrey," his father said.

Godfrey gave a great swallow, said with a rush, "Bless O Lord these gifts to our use and us to Thy service for Christ's sake Amen," and then they all sat down.

The four of them ate quietly and dutifully, their eyes on their plates, as is the way with families when there is an unresolved crisis amongst them. Afterwards they cleared the table, still in silence, then Godfrey was sent upstairs to begin getting ready for bed, Mrs. Crundall moved out to wash up with Paul following her, and Mr. Crundall went unhappily into the parlour to set the chairs in a semi-circle and fetch the Bible out from the little green-curtained bookcase.

In the kitchen, Mrs. Crundall said to her son, though without looking at him, "Paul, don't trouble your father." It was an entreaty, not a command. Paul said, "Mother" as if to begin a sentence, then let out a long breath and said nothing. When the crockery was done, they looked up to see Mr. Crundall standing in the doorway. The woman at the sink glanced from father to son with misgiving, the one perplexed and probably about to bluster, the other—but what was the matter with Paul? The older man was jealous for his God, and his pride was hurt and nettled; but the boy had been touched in some way in something far deeper than his vanity. He looks, she thought, as if he were somewhere else, and his father and I and this room here and the noise Godfrey is making splashing upstairs are only distracting him. She was suddenly a little afraid.

"I'm going to give you another chance, Paul," the voice said

from the kitchen door. Paul looked as if an image had spoken. It went on. "I'm going to ask you to come to the meeting to-night, as I've asked you the last three times, when you said yes and came. Will you come to-night, Paul?"

"No, I can't. You must see I can't, Dad. I've said why."

"Paul," his father said, sitting down in the carpet chair at the head of the kitchen table, "we all go through times like this, when our faith is tested. Couldn't you trust me, as your father and somebody who knows about these things better than you do, and come?"

"You can't know about what you don't know about. Something happened this afternoon. I can't explain, but I don't think you can help. Perhaps we're all making a fuss about nothing. I don't know."

"He's not being rude really," Mrs. Crundall put in anxiously. "He's trying to explain something to us, John." Then turning to her son, "Why can't you tell us, Paul? We'd do our best to understand."

"I don't want to talk about it." But there was no escape. "I saw something in the hill. I went up into the cave there after school, looking for stones, and saw something, and nothing seems quite the same now."

"What was it?"

"I don't know. A sort of stone."

"These everlasting stones!" His father, suddenly infuriated again, was getting to his feet. "Very well, Paul. I don't want to hear any more from you until you either come back to your duty or explain sensibly to me why not. Get your homework done and then go to bed. That's the best place for you to-night."

His mother, looking at her son, agreed silently, though for other reasons.

An hour or so later, the meeting began to assemble. Paul, his work done, dodged the arrivals and ran upstairs. The landing was already safe ground. He walked slowly along it and opened the door at the far end. Godfrey was asleep. He could account himself alone.

Sitting down on his low bed, he made no move to get undressed. The sun must have gone down behind the hill that backed the little town, for there was a slight greyness in the air, and the corners of the room were shadowy, though the long

mirror opposite the window still caught the light in its bevelled edges, with diamond gleams of orange and sapphire blue. The child in the further bed breathed regularly, but he was no quieter than the other who sat on and on for minutes on end. Bumpings of chairs and voices from the room below told him the meeting was beginning. Someone else would read this week; they would probably pray over him. He felt nothing. All he wanted was to be left quite quiet, his mind as still as a stone till it should have recovered from what had happened that afternoon. He felt this might take a long time, which would be difficult in the family. With a sigh more of resignation than anxiety, he bent forward to unlace his shoes. At that moment he saw what looked like a spot of blood in the middle of his pillow.

He was alarmed for a second, then realized what it was. Godfrey before going to sleep must have laid there, for his brother to see, the little worked stone he had brought home, child-like not wanting his offering to be forgotten. Paul leaned over and picked the tiny thing up. It lay dark and untranslucent in his hand as he curled his fingers over it. It seemed to him as if it were a world that lay there so quiet and diminutive. On any other night he would have taken out his magnifying glass and examined the little jewel minutely, lingering over it, making mental notes, looking up references in his shelf of books on gems and precious stones which stood by his bed and on which he spent, steadily, nearly all his pocket money. That was a world he knew and loved. But to-day he had been admitted, so he thought, to another, of which none of his books told and which at present he could not manage in his mind at all.

He curled two fingers over to hold the little stone firm in the palm of his hand as he stood up and, in his stockinged feet, walked past his brother's bed to the big ugly yellow dressing-table which the two boys shared. On either side of the looking-glass were two little drawers, and it was here that Paul kept his latest collection of stones. He had appropriated them for this purpose at the age of seven, when he had first begun to pick up coloured stones, in the garden, along the roads, or up on the rocks and in the caves of those honeycombed hills, and to bring them back for his collection. His mother had protested at first, but later had merely relined the drawers with an extra sheet of paper and left him to it. He had begun by bringing home almost any stone



that had been split so as to show its inner surface, the inky semi-opacity of flints, the red and white cheesy-looking round pebbles, the polished cornery ones with their bright browns and yellows. Later he had grown more particular in his choice; and this evening the drawer when opened, gently so as not to disturb the stones lying there, displayed only small stones, most of them labelled, little lumps of rock crystal or uncut amethyst and garnet. Lying among them was an old ring. It was his mother's engagement ring, kept here now because Paul had bothered her so often by asking if he might look at the ruby in its solid old-fashioned gold setting. He took it out now as he nearly always did when he came to the drawer, then walked over to the window and looked at the different quality of the red in the two stones he now held. Soon, however, he put the ruby down. The sharp bluish-crimson lights which it showed when held up to the light said nothing to him this evening. It was the other stone that he turned to, with its milkier red with something of yellow and of white in it. That was what the thing in the cave had looked like. And he knew that he had got to think about it some time, and probably now.

Sounds of chairs scraping and of heavy feet moving about came from below. The meeting was really getting under way now. Standing looking out of the window, the small red stone held delicately between finger and thumb, the boy might have been dreaming; but he was picturing to himself the scene below, the curious spectacle of eight men kneeling on the floor and praying into the backs of their chairs. Mr. Torton would lead first. Paul imagined he could hear his voice, could almost catch the words. "O Lord . . . bless us to-night as once more . . . two or three gathered together in Thy Name . . ." He stood between the small red stone in his left hand and these words floating up from down below, assailed by each. He was angry suddenly. Why should all the words be on one side, and on the other only the translucence of red stones and a wordless enigma? He felt a great need to justify himself. He ran a hand in behind his books and found what he wanted, a pad of writing paper, and there was a pencil in his pocket. The meeting prayed below in another voice. "We confess, dear Lord . . . we are all great sinners . . ." But he sat down on the floor under the window to catch what light remained and began to write his own confession.

"I, Paul Crundall, hereby bear witness of what happened to me to-day," it began, followed by the date. Then there was a long pause. He was afraid himself of putting this thing into words. Perhaps the little figure in the carved red stone was right, poised so beautifully and saying nothing. He must try to think of it as a report. "May we be drawn nearer to Thee" said the prayer meeting. He went on with his writing.

"I went up the hill after school, to have another look at the cave above Banks field. I have often been there before. I took my big electric torch to look at the rocks with. It was about 4.15 p.m. I followed my usual way inside the cave, because then I can be certain of finding my way out again. After the third turning, where it widens out, I stopped to look at the veining on the right-hand wall. The veins are white on red or purple, and run down from the roof like hair. In one place near the floor it was particularly beautiful. I thought I would do a quick drawing of it. I got a pencil and an old exercise book out of my satchel, propped up the torch on the floor so that its light fell on the wall, and began to draw. I had only just started when I began to feel queer and slightly sick, rather as if I were having to squint the whole time. The veins on the wall were quite clear, but I felt as if I were trying to concentrate on the patterned glass of a window-pane when there was something else behind it, but out of focus. So now instead of looking at the veins I brought the torch close to the wall, to see if there was anything behind. I touched the wall, which was solid and smooth. The light made it look transparent, as if it had been made of very thick glass. I could look through it in places. Through one of these clear bits I found I could see another cave, lower than the one I was in, and feeling as if it were much deeper inside the hill. The torch which I was holding now beside my face against the glassy wall just lighted it. There did not seem to be any way in."

Paul stopped. So far so good, but these had been merely preliminaries. He leant his head against the window-ledge for a moment, and closed his eyes. A breath of coolness came in now, and with it the steady run of one voice reading in the room below. So they had got that far. He listened to see if he could make out the words, and imagined he heard "an alabaster box of ointment" but could not be sure. His fingers were a little unsteady. "It's getting cold," he thought; "I must

get this over and go to bed." The little scratch of pencil on paper went on.

"Through the rock I could see in the other cave, something that was half a man and half a rock. The man was growing into the rock. Each was both at the same time. The man was white and red and stony, like the rock. He lay in a kind of niche. His left side and arm and leg were grafted into the rock already, but his head was still free, and lay comfortably against the right shoulder. It had long red hair. The stone and the body were waxen or ruddy, but hard and polished too and the light seemed to run through them so that you could see the milky veins in the rock and the faint blue marble ones under the skin. It was so beautiful that I was frightened. I turned the torch out, kept absolutely still and counted to two hundred. Then I turned it on again. The cave and the man were there just the same. I counted six hundred looking at it. The eyes were open. It did not make me think it was dead. It seemed to be so quiet because it had to grow perfectly, like a sculpture, into the hard and beautiful red rock, as if that were the only thing that mattered. When I got to six hundred my torch began to give out, and I found my way out of the cave and came out on to the hill. I do not know what it is that I have seen, but it is something holy. So now I know that I must not believe in God any more until I can understand this better. To this I pledge myself.

*Signed, Paul John Crundall."*

He was convinced it ought to be signed in blood, and got his penknife out of his pocket, but could only draw enough from one finger to make a smeary cross at one corner of the paper, against which he put "My Mark. P. J. C." It was nearly dark, and he had some difficulty in reading through his script. They were singing downstairs. The voices felt round for the opening notes of their respective parts, then began, firmly and in good harmony, upon the hymn. The boy shut his mind to it, re-reading what he had written. It seemed to him thin and wretched, conveying nothing of what he had seen; but when he tried to think of better words, they came only in ones and twos, like "calcified" or "lactescent," or "filmed with shellac" for the eyes, or in odd pairs like "chalcedony and malachite" which was immediately partnered in his mind by another pair, "Chaldean

or Amalekite." But what had that to do with it? In the end he was left with a phrase that he thought he must have remembered from somewhere,

"The tawny lacquer of the hair  
Among the sleepy salactites."

He wrote it down in the space at the bottom of his last page, only very faintly. His mind was distracted by the determined hymn from down below. What was it they were singing? "Nothing in my hand I bring" . . . "When mine eyelids close in death" . . . oh yes, of course.

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee."

That would be all for to-night.

Paul stood up. He folded his paper and put it into the drawer with the stones. He was undressed and was just getting into bed when he saw on the wall above his bedhead the Scripture calendar that had hung there since Christmas. They had each had one, Godfrey's being a picture of the Nativity, while his had been a rather red and blue representation of the Good Shepherd. True to his pledge he took this down, wondered for a moment what to do with it, then hung it with the other above his brother's bed. The child snuffled contentedly in his sleep. It was as if he were pleased at this return present for his own gift of the small red stone, still shut away, the jewel warm against the flesh, in his brother's closed hand.

# MARC CHAGALL

By

J. P. HODIN

"I WAS living and working in America at a time when all humanity was involved in a world-wide tragedy. America's hospitality gave me the strength to carry on. And yet my art has remained true to the old ideals." So Chagall wrote in 1947. Now he has returned to France after seven years' absence. It was Paris that gave him inspiration and the breath of life in the old days; Paris provided the atmosphere in which his art developed and came to full flower. To-day he still believes in France. "Although the circle of her great masters seems closed, France will produce new wonders in the realm of art. I am sure of that. Nothing can shake my faith in the genius of France."

Chagall has not become any younger in the interval. He is in his sixty-second year. He has been shaken not only by the horror of our civilized bestiality, but also by the loss of the human being who was a help and inspiration to him from the beginning, his wife, Bella Chagall, who died of an insidious disease in America.

"I owe everything to her," he said in a low voice, as though he did not want anyone else to hear what we were talking about; and he gazed long at a photograph of her in her youth. Now all at once he seemed a legendary figure, standing quite still, as though turned to stone, his face old—a hundred years, two hundred years old. His hands hung down, heavy as lead, his eye was glassy. I have never experienced such a transformation. It lasted only a moment, but he must have travelled far in his thoughts; perhaps he had been listening at the crystal door between this life and the next. On the wall hung his famous picture of the grandfather-clock and the big bird's wing, giving one the feeling of time rushing past. It is also a picture of the endless journey he has made. To left and to right stand the derelict houses of his native town, Witebsk.

Our meeting took place in the Villa Aulouette in Orgeval,



near St. Germain-en-Laye, where Chagall has settled down with his three-year-old son and the child's young English mother. (Ida Chagall, his daughter by his first marriage, lives in Paris.) But he is not likely to stay there for any length of time. He longs for the South—Cassis or Vence. He does not feel really at peace so near to Paris. "Wherever I can work," he says, "there I feel happy." His young companion, Virginia, came into his life as Hendrijke Stoffels came into Rembrandt's. I recall that in his book *My Life*, Chagall wrote: "Perhaps Rembrandt would have liked me." She gave him new courage to face life, new joy in his work, and youth renewed. And that explains why, as he said when we were talking about the nihilism of modern youth: "I prefer love and optimism to that. On se trompe tout le temps, la vie est comme ça. Mais je préfère de me tromper avec l'optimisme et avec l'amour."

Even before Chagall went to America his art had undergone a fundamental change. It was obvious from the pictures hanging on the walls everywhere in this comfortable house. At first Chagall painted without any teaching at all: a wedding procession, a funeral, the birth of a child, a beggar, a rabbi, a dream-like fiddler. At that period he was an original primitive "de la race du Christ," as Raïssa Maritain has put it so beautifully. He only had to shut his eyes in order to see. Reality as he experienced it was different from the reality that art galleries had to offer him.

Chagall came closer to me. He is of middle height, supple as a tight-rope walker. He wears a large-checked woollen shirt and a velvet jacket. His face is finely chiselled, his hands are as delicate as a woman's. "Youth is always in need of orientation. It is said that talent is necessary too." He smiled. "But who gave me orientation? There was a picture of the Czar, Ivan the Terrible. One saw the frightened people. The swollen veins, every little hair, every pore was meticulously painted. The Czar had a tear in his eye. 'Tu ne serais jamais un peintre,' I said to myself. Purely artistic reasons drove me out of Russia before and after the Revolution. And what was I to find in Paris? When I met Apollinaire, the standard-bearer of Cubism, for the first time, I did not dare to show him my pictures. I understood as little of French Cubism as of Russian Realism. Personally, I believe that a scientific tendency can never be a fortunate one for art.

Impressionism was alien to me too. I grasp everything simply by instinct. Art is for me a condition of the soul. The only master I ever had was my father and not Cézanne, not van Gogh. He was a simple workman. When I saw his tired hands, or when I saw my mother. . . ."

"And then Surrealism. To me the Surrealists are just the same as the Naturalists. Fundamentally it's all the same thing. All the Surrealists wanted was to paint a different 'pipe,' a different 'guitar,' a different 'tree.' Automatism never entered into my mind."

"Why is it that this one figure in this picture stands on its head? To underline reality by means of contrast. Realistic and impressionist pictures are all so monotonous. To me it is like a meal without salt or pepper."

"Actually I love all painting, but its elements must be pure. J'admets tous. But I detest abstract art. It is intolerant. Everything has to give way, the romantic, the figurative. . . . Even the Cubists never went as far as to say: Seulement nous. And anyway, abstract painting is not even new, for it is derived from Cubism. Take for instance Kandinsky. He painted like a cobbler, his work was rigid. Mondrian was more poetical. But I prefer Klee to all of them, a thousand times."

We left the studio and went down a few steps. Chagall stopped. "I'll explain to you why the intellectuals never grasp the full meaning of my art. All post-cubist artists substitute brain-activity for what should be in the heart. Anything constructed can easily be analysed by any brain. They talk of the poetic element, of inventions. I don't search for the poetic. I have searched for neither poetry nor literature nor for symbols. I only try to be myself. To be honest and simple. Even now I am just like a beginner. When a picture has been sufficiently tortured, when it is sufficiently unhappy, I let it be. Sometimes I work on one subject for several years. It is preferable to work a long time on one subject."

The dining-room is large and has French windows leading on to a garden terrace. Chagall pointed to one of his early *avant-garde* pictures. The colour seemed a little cold. A man's head, separated from the body and flying somewhere in space, must have caused a great sensation before the first world war. Some critics prefer these pictures to the later ones, where the musical quality of

colour, which underwent such development in America, is predominant.

"Des choses folles," was all Chagall said. But without this heroic period of his creative life, during which he was influenced by Cubism and Fauvism, both of which had to be absorbed by his imagination, he could not have painted the way he paints to-day.

"Avantgardism is necessary. Art must keep on renewing itself. I don't think the present-day generation of artists has less talent than we had. But tell me, how does it come about that art degenerates in quality from decade to decade? Almost all children have genius, if only they have a chance to develop. All this seems to be caused by restlessness, by the world situation, by politics. It is a sociological problem."

During lunch Chagall talked about his longing to go back to Russia. Two years ago he expressed his wish to be permitted at least to see the ruins of his home town. He did not even receive an answer. "One ought to travel in foreign countries for a short time and then return home," he said. "Van Gogh, Pascin, Modigliani—they all died young. But Munch drew strength from his native soil. Man is like a tree, his roots lie in the earth of his country. Then the branches may spread out over the whole world. Of course there are trees that hang in mid-air and others that stand in the water. But those that are rooted in solid ground bear the best fruit. Why do I always paint Witebsk? With these pictures I create my own reality for myself, I recreate my home. This flower piece I painted in 1929, when I was longing for Russia. The flowers I painted at other times were presents. They came to me and I did not want them to wither, so I painted them."

Here on an easel was Chagall's picture "The Cock." It was painted in 1947, in America, when he was homesick for France, his second home. It is the Gaulish chanticleer holding the palette, from which the bride arises like a red flame. It is Chagall's eternal love-song to Bella. In the background, in purple tones, is Witebsk, everlastingly present.

Chagall is the painter of the nostalgic yearning for the first unforgettable impressions that life gives us. These impressions have lingered in his mind as primal images. They are like the



THE MARTYR 1939



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 1946





DOUBLE FACE 1947



*By courtesy of the Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York*

**MADONNA 1948**

letters of an alphabet, like the words from which his language sprang. The candlestick with the burning lights, the moon, the animal playing the violin, Christ, the Wandering Jew, a figure floating in space, the riding girl of the circus ring. So comes metempsychosis. A fish, a cat, a calf with a human face, a man with an animal's head. For Chagall all life has the same mystic primal source. And so the time element comes in. The clock with the wing, the winged carp, the angel falling from on high and the angel that inspires.

Standing before the picture "Resurrection," which contains some of these primal images, Chagall merely said: "The resurrection of life, not dogmatic, expressed by means of certain colours. There is no rule for the understanding of my colours. Chacun de nous est né avec son couleur. One only has to let them come forth, liberate them. Plus la couleur est riche, plus la vie est tragique. The truer the colour is, the nearer we are the truth."

"Perspective? What you see here is not nature. I am not Cézanne, who modulated in order to paint volume. I am concerned with spiritual space. The others *create* objects, the others stand *in front of* nature. I have it inside myself. Everything contributes to art, even the buzzing of a fly."

"The Naked Cloud." Two reclining girls' figures, floating like a cloud over a Russian village. Beneath them the moon, above them the animal playing—the animal with the soul—and then the keening woman. His delicate hands moved lovingly over another picture, "The Soul of the Town." He said: "Il y a une chose d'instantané qui s'épanouisse sur l'éternité, et l'éternité, qui se change dans une minute." My gaze followed his hand. It spoke to me of grey tones, of a black in one corner, of the grey blending into purple, and then the red. Colours came alive for me as never before.

"If you knew how many doubts there are within me, you would have doubts of me yourself." Doubts? Chagall is the purest experience I have been accorded since the end of the war. How could I have doubts of him? I have doubts only of those who say that he is played out and is only repeating himself. For can there ever be enough repetition of the things he has to say to us? He is just about to start work on the illustration for two of the most beautiful books in the literature of the world, for Tériade: *The Decameron* and La Fontaine's *Fables*. And Chagall,

who is the first painter since Rembrandt to make us re-experience, in amazing intensity, the visions of the Old Testament, has been commissioned to decorate a church. The old wish-dream is fulfilled, the painter of stage-décor, in Russia and in America, can now, like an old master, display his rich imagination on sacred walls.

## BROADCASTING

THE adaptation as a feature programme for the radio of *The Trial* by Franz Kafka was an extraordinarily difficult feat to attempt. "Adaptations" are immediately suspect by critical standards worthy of the name. A work of art whose reputation rests upon its original identity cannot change its form without changing its nature, more or less, and in radio it is usually more. Situations are commonly telescoped and cut by a hand other than the author's; discursive or contemplative passages are distorted into scenes, and delicate shades of meaning are slapped on the back and made to play children's games by lively actors. No modern literature could seem more vulnerable to the dangers of adaptation than the novels of Kafka. Although they contain physical action and are superficially uncomplicated, their stature is attained by the most subtle evocation of fantasy, using terrible and inescapable situations, yet treating them with a documentary simplicity. It is astonishing how great a measure of success the producer, Mr. Riller, achieved. Somehow he kept the dramatic elements in his actors from swamping the fragile geography of the story. His principal character was both a victim and a guilty man; and that is the core of every situation known to Kafka. His persecutors were realistic and yet uncanny, because their conduct was "beyond his comprehension." So to him they were continually behaving cruelly and unjustly with a perfectly natural air, yet he was never fully convinced that they were in the last analysis cruel or unjust, or that he himself did not deserve punishment, even though he was blind to the nature of his guilt. That is the secondary situation indigenous to the world of Kafka. A word of particular praise must be given to Mr. Cusack, who played the central character with feeling for every layer of the author's communicated being, from the trivial and the amorous to the terrible promontories from which he gazes, humanly shortsighted, into eternity.

Another Irish voice we have recently had the pleasure of being able to hear on the Third Programme was that of Professor W. B. Stanford speaking about James Joyce and the theme of *Ulysses*, from more ancient times until its use by the Irish writer.

The Third were wise in extending to the subject of *Ulysses* nearly an hour, about twice the length usually given to a talk. It contained not only scholarship—that is common enough—but a wealth of intelligent “observation” and it deserves to be reproduced from time to time, as is the custom in the Third Programme with exceptional broadcasts.

In general there has been lately a pleasing tendency in the Third Programme to encourage wit and personality and the “good talker” as well as just the specialist crammed full of facts. The series “Personal Pleasures” on the Home Service recommends itself to those who are still interested in the possibility of recreations other than group recreations and opinions other than standard clichés.

JOHN MCCONNELL

## FERNAND LÉGER

THE exhibition of paintings and drawings by Fernand Léger, arranged by the Arts Council and the Association Française d'Action Artistique at the Tate Gallery, was exceedingly opportune. It not only introduced a major artist of the contemporary scene to the British public, but raised a number of problems relating to the artist's position in the community, and even the future of painting itself. It struck at once a note of modernity; here were those bright colours, those distortions of effect and those bold forms that we have come to associate with the vision of the twentieth-century artist. But the exhibition not only stated that Léger was of our time; it drove home the reasons why he is an artist capable of representing our age. Both as man and artist, Léger is one of those virile personalities whose work is stamped with power of their own magnetism. He has shown at the same time that a direct and spontaneous approach to life can be combined with a formal discipline, and that French classicism, adapted to different circumstances, retains its relevance. His painting is personal but yet popular; its roots lie in the central tradition of French art. Too often Léger has been considered as the recorder of a mechanistic, regimented world, and as robot. This is to fasten on the overt appearance of his subject matter, to be dazzled by his iconography, and to neglect his interpretation of it; what indeed could be less heartless than the glow of his colours, the solidity of his forms, and the sense of growth that marks his later work? It is an art which expresses pleasure in the visible world, and reveals an ability to recognise the relations and the differences between man and the machine. It shows Léger's attempt to interpret the world for himself and for others.

In his youth Léger, as did his other vital contemporaries, reacted against Impressionism; it had become too fragmentary and too



evocative and no longer conveyed a meaning. Léger turned to that rewarding exploration of striking colours which the Fauves employed to express their emotional responses, and then to the formal discoveries of the Cubists. Both these styles were to form the basis for his own; and to them must be added the influence of Delaunay's views of the toppling towers of Paris. But Léger was not only stimulated by artistic movements; his experiences in the first world war were important in shaping his art. In a statement quoted by Douglas Cooper in his brilliant monograph on the artist<sup>1</sup> the painter said that these experiences had affected his whole approach to art: "The exuberance, the variety, the humour, the perfection of certain types of man with whom I found myself; their exact sense of useful realities and of their timely application in the middle of this life-and-death drama in which we had been plunged. More than that: I found them poets, inventors of every day poetic images—I am thinking of their colourful and adaptable use of slang. Once I had got my teeth in that sort of reality, I never let go of objects again."

Determined to render the bustle of life, the pressure of the machine and the position of man in an increasingly scientific world, Léger created a realism which remains human. He has become the painter of the machine, not because he is attracted by the cold perfection of a revolving wheel or the functional exactness of a level crossing, but because he has seen in them the stuff of life itself; they are the images which face men and women at every turn. Whether we like it or not, the disc, the tube, the cylinder are as much a part of our imagination as were the writings of antiquity for the painters of the Renaissance; just as much as Turner's "Rain, Steam and Speed" reflected the march of the Industrial Revolution, so Léger's painting shows the power of the machine. But his painting does not serve to glory it at the expense of human spirit, rather to indicate its relation to man.

He is attracted by the ebb and flow of movement, by the speed of the machine, by the complexities of the city. He is fascinated by new techniques. In this respect, the way in which Léger has treated such themes recalls Dos Passos; both men have employed the technical devices of the cinema to achieve their aims; with Dos Passos the flashback and with Léger the close-up; with both, too, their use has enabled them to isolate a particular aspect of the whole, and to capture its characteristics. As they dominated the rooms in the Tate, Léger's paintings formed a frieze of contemporary life in which the problems of space and movement found their correct representation. That Léger should have worked for the cinema and ballet further illustrates his absorption in the problems of movement.

<sup>1</sup> *Fernand Léger*, Lund Humphries 42s.

By painting in this fashion Léger has helped to bridge the gulf between the artist and the community. The history of nineteenth-century art shows that the artist was an isolated figure. He was the revolutionary, the prophet working in solitude, to be recognized only at the end of his life, if then; so the era that witnessed some of the greatest achievements of French painting is also the epoch of the Salon des Refusés. This has meant not only that the painter was the victim of circumstances, but that society itself was the victim of its own lack of judgment. The public failed to enjoy much that it should have done. This anomaly occurred at a period when education was broadened, though at times, it must be admitted, vulgarized. To maintain, of course, that the painter must march in step with his generation, is to embark on dangerous ground; but there is surely no harm, as the Middle Ages attest, if these happy circumstances should prevail, and to remain in isolation is hardly desirable even for the most extravagant of personalities.

Léger has seen life in large terms because his imagination is robust. But not every artist feels the need to paint in this fashion or to seek his themes in the particular character of his epoch. There are distinctions in painting as in poetry, so that a Braque, a Gris or a Modigliani can pursue their work in virtual isolation. Yet for other men the desire to wield the brush for a major aim, though not necessarily on behalf of a major theme, had proved irresistible; as B. R. Haydon showed, it could also prove disastrous. Léger has taken the ordinary elements of existence but he has projected them in the grand manner. He has reached this position as the result of a logical development. In his early work, he demonstrated a delicate understanding of formal relations and employed a virile colour. Had he remained content with this style, however, his painting might have been no more than a variant, agreeable and talented, on the discoveries of the Fauves and the Cubists. But he was constrained to move in another direction, to investigate the relations between painting and architecture, and to construct strong, architectonic forms. The sequence of his styles, as Douglas Cooper has admirably shown, follows a consistent pattern. In his larger compositions, his capacity for constructing an intricate pattern synthesizing elements from Cubism, Fauvism and Abstraction, is apparent, as in the "Mother and Child" of 1922, or the "Composition with Parrots" (1935-1939). To talk of his forms as rubbery and to question the relevance of his flat patterns and his attempt to relate them to rounded, moulded forms, is understandable enough, but his attempt to solve the problem has been justified. It is perhaps, too, a symbol of man's position in regard to the machine. Léger has succeeded in creating his own conception of space. He has achieved this just because of this combination of large forms and flat patterns with

strong colours; they serve to establish a relationship between the rhythms of each portion of the composition and the whole; their interplay results in the presentation of a visual world, based on reality, but enjoying its own existence. It is composed, as Douglas Cooper has well said, of "a plastic dynamism set in motion by colour." Such distortions of forms as occur, are ordained by the demands of the picture's pattern and its own reality. This new vision has enabled him to represent the interweaving of forms and to render a sense of growth.

At times Léger's painting has reflected a need for greater space. He has been fortunate to receive the opportunity to work on a large scale. One of his most notable works of this character, of which a sketch only is shown at the Tate Gallery, is for the Church of Assy. It is a mosaic façade consisting of a head of the Virgin in a roundel over a central doorway, with her attributes arranged fanwise around her; the head and each of the objects are drawn in plain black and set off against pure background colour. Here Léger has tackled a problem of such magnitude; the result is an impressive work of art. It is imbued with the artist's feeling for his material and with a natural sense of piety. In this connection, it is worth recalling the words of Father Couturier at whose suggestion the mosaic was created: "The religious character of a work of art does not depend, either necessarily or principally, upon the representation of some sacred subject; much more profoundly does it depend upon the *quality* of the plastic forms. And they are endowed with this *quality* directly and spontaneously through the private disposition of the heart and mind of the artist. Neither the subject represented, nor the use of any particular formula, hieratic or otherwise, can change this." That Léger should have painted a sacred subject is yet another indication of the richness of his nature and the variety of his approach; it shows, too, an understanding of the related sources of artistic experience.

Léger has been prepared to take risks and to experiment. If an error of taste can be felt in "Leisure" or in "The Gioconda and Keys," it comes from the same exuberance of temperament which directed Courbet; and to have too much taste is to stifle from surfeit. It shows that he is anxious to renew the sources of painting and to represent the world as it lies around him. Léger has viewed the complications and the particularities of our environment with tenderness and understanding; he has given them a permanent place in his art. His vision is radiant with colour, marked by its rhythmic sense of design and a sense of growth. He has opened a window on to our weary world and shown that now, as always, it contains possibilities and beauties for the creative artist.

DENYS SUTTON

## REVIEWS

### THE MODERN LEVIATHAN

*La Vingt-Cinquième Heure*, by C. Virgil Gheorghiu (Plon, Paris, 350 fr).

IT seems to me that the part played by fiction in *La Vingt-Cinquième Heure* is more or less negligible. I do not mean that everything in the book is strictly autobiographical—although the author and his wife have themselves undergone certain of the most harrowing experiences here related. But there has been nothing for M. Gheorghiu to do but assemble the scattered elements of this narrative, which remains essentially true. This book cannot be exploited by any political party, and this, it seems to me, is its most valuable quality. The evil which is here denounced is a universal one: and it becomes more and more clear that the East is tainted by it just as much as the West. I shall content myself with pointing out a few passages which seem to me particularly significant and which will allow the reader to form for himself an idea of the exceptional importance of the theme.

The writer Traian Koruga and his wife Nora, although they have always been favourable to the cause of the Allies (all the more so since she is a Jewess who has escaped the Jewish persecution) have come on foot several hundred miles at the moment of the German defeat in 1945 in order to reach the American zone, which appears to them a place of refuge. They arrive at Weimar. But it is certainly not the spirit of Goethe which animates the American governor of the town. To him it matters very little what Traian and his wife are or what they think. They are bearers of a Rumanian passport—Rumania is officially considered by America as an enemy power: *ergo* Traian and his wife must be treated as enemy subjects and imprisoned. "How long will it take them to discover that they have arrested us and keep us in prison?" asks Nora, "I can't hold out much longer." "They will never even notice we are alive," says Traian. "Western civilization in the last phase of its existence is no longer aware of the individual, and there is nothing to lead us to hope it will ever become so. This society knows only a few of the dimensions of the individual: the whole man, taken individually, no longer exists for it. You, for example, are nothing but an enemy citizen arrested in German territory. And that is the maximum amount of characteristics that Western technical society can assimilate. . . . When it arrests or kills someone, this society does not arrest or kill something *that lives*, but an idea. Logically this crime cannot be imputed to it, for no machine can be accused of crime. And no one could ask a machine to treat men according to their individual characteristics. All I know is, that the very fact of

submitting man to the laws and criteria of machines is equivalent to assassination. A man obliged to live under the conditions and in the surroundings of a fish would die in a few minutes, and vice versa. The West has created a society which resembles a machine . . . it obliges men to live in the heart of this society and to adapt themselves to the laws of the machine. But once men come to resemble machines to the point of identifying themselves with them, there will be no more men upon earth. . . ."

One can see that *La Vingt-Cinquième Heure* is like a continuation of the *Erewhon* of Samuel Butler. But between the two books there is a difference which allows us to measure the distance covered in more than a century. Where *Erewhon* was a kind of utopia of the same type as *Gulliver's Travels*, nothing could be less utopian or outside time than M. Gheorghiu's novel. This tale of a man, Iohann Moritz, successively denounced as a Jew when he is Aryan, then Aryan and member of the race of Lords of the Earth, treated by the Allies as a friend, then as an enemy, all this without anyone ever taking the least account of *what he really is* in himself: this narrative of madmen related with the precision of a conscientious commentator, appears as the literal expression of what man tends to become in a world that denies him. But, after all, what is this world? Of what is it made up? It is a world where "citizens" tend to take the place of men. "The 'citizens' live neither in woods nor in the jungle, but in offices; nevertheless they are more cruel than the wild beasts of the jungle, they are born of the crossing of Man and Machine. They are a bastard race, the most powerful at present on the surface of the earth. Their aspect resembles the aspect of men, and often one risks confounding the two, but immediately one realizes that they do not behave as men, but as machines: in place of hearts, they have chronometers. And these are citizens. . . . Strange crossing, they have invaded all the earth."

I am not sure that the analysis is here pushed quite far enough: in order to understand this metastasis—this medical term is the only appropriate one—it would be necessary to bring in the Schelerian psychology of resentment: if the citizens of the popular democracies are what we know them to be, it is not only that they are machines, but that they tend to become "under-men" in whom the hatred of superiority in all its forms is a sort of vital principle.

Why *La Vingt-Cinquième Heure*? one may ask. It is the hour which comes after the last hour, the hour when even the coming of a Messiah could resolve nothing, "because a technocratized society is incapable of creating spirit and is consequently delivered up to monsters." We might well consider such a pessimism excessive: I myself believe that a miracle is possible as long as there are human beings to think and pray, but when one knows what is going on in M. Gheorghiu's native



country, and sees the conditions to which millions and millions of people are submitted, becoming ever more inhuman, it is impossible not to recognize that there are certain points of view from which this radical pessimism cannot be avoided. Is it necessary, then, to choose the attitude of those who take refuge in the hope of war, as if, after the experiences of the last three-quarters of a century, there was still some hope that war could result in salvation?

In any case the author does not delude himself as to the significance of what may, perhaps, lie in the future. It breaks out at the end of his book. This is what the wife of Traian (himself killed some months previously by a sentinel of the camp in which he was held prisoner) says: "This war . . . is not a war of the West against the East. It is nothing more or less than an internal revolution within the framework of Western technical society. Russia, after the Communist Revolution, became the most developed branch of the Western technical revolution. . . . Russia has taken all her theories from the West and has simply put them into practice: she has reduced Man to zero just as she learned to do from the West. . . . She has imitated the West as only a barbarian and a savage could do." From which it follows that this war is nothing more than a revolution inside Western society and consequently did not take place on behalf of men. Moreover, I would add that theoretically it could be admitted that the real men, taken as such, could benefit from this kind of brotherly annihilation. But that is nothing but a verbal solution, for indeed men are almost, as it were, consecrated to the work of being snatched up themselves and crushed to dust by this kind of cyclone. Must one then take refuge in the hope which is that of Traian's father, the priest Koruga: "In the end, God will take pity on men, just as He has already done so many times: like the ark of Noah upon the waves, the few men who remain *men* will float on the backwash of this great collective disaster"? And this is the only frail light that glimmers in this great despairing book.

I hope that M. Gheorghiu's work will be read and discussed by men honest enough not to seek refuge in the comfortable thought that the incidents in the story take place far away, in Rumania or in Germany. It is clear—and nothing is more important than to point this out—that these localizations have now lost all real meaning: what happens two thousand miles away happens here: between here and elsewhere there is no longer any difference. The human drama is everywhere identical. We who are provisionally, perhaps very provisionally, spared, should lend the most attentive and sympathetic ear to such a witness, uttering the *De Profundis* of a tortured humanity.

GABRIEL MARCEL

## VICTORIAN STUDIES

*Purgatory Revisited. A Victorian Parody*, by Lord Holden. (Skeffington 12s 6d).

**P**ARODY lies on the most dangerous ground in the whole region of comedy, and it should be avoided by any but highly accomplished writers. Not only are considerable learning and skill essential, but to these rare qualities must be added a heroic aptitude for self-sacrifice, for while the processes which go to the making of this kind of fun are stern and fatiguing, the product itself must be lightness personified. The best parody is not only heartless to its victims but to its contriver: the flash and elegance of the effect must be such as make us unconscious, and even careless, of suffering needlewomen behind the scenes. If it is attempted on less exacting lines than these, dreadful things result: the *soufflé* totters; whimsicality degenerates horribly into coyness. *A Christmas Garland* is the best book of parody produced in the last fifty years, and I fear that the work under review must be among the very worst.

The form is a record of a supposed visit to Purgatory made by the author under the tutelage of St. Philip Neri who acts the role of Virgil to this Dante. The inmates of Seven Circles, all eminent Victorians, are interviewed, and since there is almost no variety in the treatment of the different episodes, the reader soon develops intense queue-phobia which the introduction of many diversions, as it were street-entertainers, can do little to calm. The book is wholly superfluous: nothing is got from the ordeal.

The main fault is that this debunking of Victorians is undertaken with too slender a knowledge of the subject. Up come Lytton Strachey's jibes again, without their freshness, and not purified of any of Strachey's intentional or unintentional howlers. Cardinal Manning is shown to us as the inhuman persecutor of Newman, just as we last saw him, while there for the use of any good parodist who will take the trouble to work on this fine subject is the Manning-Newman-Ward triangle, which Strachey, with inexplicable carelessness, overlooked. Dr. Arnold waddles in on the short legs which Strachey thoughtfully invented for him; and General Gordon is, of course, found in an advanced stage of intoxication with the famous brandy bottle occupying the table with the Bible. The bottle, I believe, is authentic, but the author of this book clearly did not know that Strachey slipped Gordon's excessive use of it into the story on his own initiative, just as he slipped in Manning's crooked little chat with Pio Nono. In the latter case he did not positively assert that he was recording fact, as he did in the case of the brandy, to the immense improvement of his essay, and the undoing of this disciple.

For all that, Lord Holden is very much better when he is plodding behind Lytton Strachey than when he is on his own, or plodding behind lesser men. If ever there was a character made for parody, it was the Iron Duke, but unfortunately Strachey never tackled him thoroughly, so Lord Holden is lost. We are given a picture of a mental defective surrounded by symbols of his war-guilt, concerning which, in the manner of the insane, he is at one moment regretful and at another hilariously boastful. Lord Holden implies other extraordinarily harsh judgments on the Victorians, notably on Greville who is found undergoing a term of punishment for one of his finest literary performances. The worst portraits in this gallery are those of Tennyson, Scott, Florence Nightingale, and Oscar Wilde. However, from Lord Holden's incompetent flagellation all his intended victims come out quite unscathed, and that at least is something pleasant.

CHRISTOPHER SYKES

*John Ruskin: The Portrait of a Prophet*, by Peter Quennell (Collins 15s).

NO doubt we are in a better strategic position today than at any other period to size up eminent Victorians. We know too much of their thwarted ambitions to venerate them as superhuman dummies; at the other extreme our own insecure age keeps us from belittling them with cheap jibes. Their weaknesses are as sympathetic to us as their feats of strength, their failures as their triumphs. With kindness and love of truth we uncover frailty beneath their firm surfaces. New information is continually coming to light about their private lives which we seize upon, not really so as to prick bubbles of ready-made opinions, but so as to reduce these monoliths to our own scale of values where, under our microscopes, we may carry out our diagnoses. The love-letter has proved more rewarding as well as more stimulating than the platform speech in the hands of a few responsible biographers. In the home among parents and lovers the private drama, which the public personality attempts to conceal or distort, is enacted; and with the key to melancholy secrets we think we may solve the puzzle of public utterances and behaviour, and explain the inconsistencies, the tension, the genius in the work of these men.

The private life of Ruskin was most of all in need of clarification, since there seemed no way of accounting for the inconsistencies in his character and hence for the apparent illogicality of his aesthetic and moral doctrines. The recent sensational revelations about the disaster of his marriage, taken in conjunction with his stern upbringing, his life-long devotion to his parents and his consuming passion, as a middle-aged man, for a small child, provided the main clues in the

hidden drama. Any competent student of human nature and of Freud could have supplied the missing psychological explanation: that Ruskin was born with healthy sensuous appetites but, associating them with guilt, was disgusted at the idea of satisfying them. He sought the love of immature girls because this relationship did not involve physical contact. In the contemplation of their purity, spontaneity and touching charm, in a whimsical exchange of letters, resided, so it seems, almost the whole of his emotional life away from his parents. We hear of no constant companions during his early manhood, no truly adult love. He was kind and considerate to these children and even happy in their company, although he remained for ever a remote and solitary figure, more at ease with stone capitals and Tintoretto than with human beings; but if as grown women they threatened to make too heavy demands on him and to hamper his freedom of movement, he was driven to cruelty or deception, partly perhaps on account of physical disabilities but also—and this is more significant—on account of psychological inhibitions. The ideal of purity with which he had come to identify the object of his love was shattered by gross facts. We have only to contemplate the drawing, reproduced in Mr. Quennell's book, that Ruskin made in 1874 of Rose La Touche—a drawing that might have served as an illustration by Odilon Redon to an edition of *Alice in Wonderland*, so remote, so insubstantial are the features of this child of dreams—to realize that her marriage to him, if she had been foolish enough to consent to it (and on this occasion he was very persistent) would have been as disastrous as Effie Gray's.

It is a theme that lends itself to vulgar treatment, and at the hands of an unscrupulous journalist, a book about the private life of Ruskin since the publication of *The Order of Release*, could have been turned into a best-seller. But too much of the evidence remains obscure for a final verdict and the only reputable approach at this stage is along stepping-stones of hint and pertinent quotation. Mr. Quennell has treated the theme with the utmost delicacy and caution. We begin to understand the conflict in Ruskin between love of beauty and moral sense, between the inclination to abandon himself to voluptuous Veronese and the insistence on the nobility of subject-matter in art, between love of the unspoilt country-side and desire for improved housing conditions. Mr. Quennell, as he also showed in his book on Byron, is at his best when noting the mechanism of the heart, and the pages dealing with Ruskin's sexual life are the most penetrating that have so far appeared on this subject. But although he claims in his Foreword that "the object of this book is to portray John Ruskin both as a writer and as a personality: to show the close connection between his personal growth and his literary development; and to suggest how the frustration of his private hopes finally brought to an end his career

of public usefulness," it must be admitted that he fails to demonstrate how and why Ruskin's art criticism caused a total upheaval in modes of thought. His literary output is too vast and varied to be adequately treated within the compass of such a volume; and his Neo-Gothic conception of art and life is too unruly to be drawn up in the ranks of such polished prose. Since Ruskin is now very much alive, another book about his achievements as an art critic and as a Socialist will have to be written. The author of it will find Mr. Quennell's account of his life sound and imaginative. But about his work there still remains a great deal to be said.

BENEDICT NICOLSON

*Alfred Tennyson*, by Charles Tennyson (Macmillan 30s).

THIRTY-ONE years ago, escorting Cardinal Bourne on a picnic from Jerusalem across the Jordan, I ventured to ask His Eminence what he thought of Lytton Strachey's recent essay on *Newman*. He replied that though the work had undeniable merits it was wrongly placed in time: too late for personal or collateral acquaintance with the living man, and too early for publication or even consultation of the many papers in England and elsewhere essential to balanced presentment. For all his charm of writing, Strachey could therefore achieve neither "near" autobiography, nor history. Sir Charles Tennyson, steeped in the family tradition sharpened by affectionate early memories, and enriched and illumined by full and definitive documentation, has attained both.

The resulting portrait, at once full dress and undress, leads the reader with a sequence of compellingly short chapters through a life dedicated if ever life was: from the four-year-old boy who on stormy days could be heard declaiming "I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind" and the fourteen-year-old who, on the news of Byron's death at Missolonghi ran out to his beloved brook, threw himself down on the ground and carved upon the sandstone the words "Byron is dead"; to the "recluse of Somersby," to the "national institution" in one of the great periods of English poesy.

Later Tennysonians from the nineties onwards, apt to assume the easy unchecked advance of their poet's genius and recognition from Cambridge to the Laureateship and so to patronize his morbid sensitivity to criticism, will learn with sympathetic surprise of the stupid persecution to which some of his finest early work was subjected. He had indeed won from his youth the honour of being belittled by the small but extolled, both as poet and man, by the great—and revered to the end by such spirits as FitzGerald, Spedding, Jowett, Gladstone, Dickens, Thackeray and Browning (whose social pleasures he some-



times surprisingly emulates). The biographer neither exaggerates nor diminishes the triumph, amply testified by tributes of written and spoken admiration from high and low; any more than the grandson attempts to conceal the foibles and oddities with which he affectionately touches in the portrait of this rugged, wincing greatness.

Tennyson's judgment in petulant ripostes to critics was as faulty as in the investment by which he lost his patrimony. He bargains with humorous pathos for his nightly bottle of "strong port," and will by no means forego his black tobacco and clay pipe. The arrangements for his long opposed marriage a hundred years ago "must have been hurriedly made, for both the dresses and the cake arrived too late for the ceremony." His attempts to repel the lion-huntress Mrs. Sabina Greville (in herself a saga) seem to have culminated when, as they went down the steps (after a dinner at Lord Houghton's) "she permitted herself some mild extravagance of homage, and Henry James who was just in front of them, heard his pleasant growling note 'Oh yes! you may do what you like—so long as you don't kiss me before the cabman.'" The retiring bard appreciated attention; he wanted, like Lawrence of Arabia, to "have it both ways."

These and like foibles do but set off the Olympian grandeur of Alfred Tennyson, pacing the heights in communion with Homer, Dante, and (his idol) Shakespeare; his spiritual no less than his artistic conscience and his intense belief in the high responsibilities of his vocation—"Poetry may solve the riddle of the universe. Philosophy and science never can."

The senior branch of the family, cruelly disinherited in Alfred's father, is whimsically avenged in such dry citations of his grandson as "a neighbour, calling to see the consequential Privy Councillor, Charles Tennyson d'Eyncourt, and ringing the portcullis bell, was received by the butler with the statement, delivered in all solemnity—"The Right Honourable Gentleman is walking on the barbican"—an item compensating richly to author and reader alike.

The date, occasion (often highly significant) and reception of the poems as they appeared are instructively recorded, with a just minimum of literary exposition, Tennyson's lucent verse having long received the modicum required. How many admirers of the vitally enhancing lyrics in *The Princess* realize that these were a late afterthought by him who is of all English poets the most fastidiously Virgilian in his constant struggle for perfection?

This delightfully written Life already authoritative must prove definitive; it should be read, re-read, and owned, for it will take its place with the few great poet biographies in the language.

RONALD STORRS

## JOHN SKELTON

*Skelton: the Life and Times of an Early Tudor Poet*, by H. L. R. Edwards  
(Cape 188).

MR. EDWARDS is an accomplished researcher who has been engaged on Skelton since 1932, and has made valuable fresh contributions to the subject. He has been able to make use of the many articles, and the three monographs, which have appeared in recent years. He handles evidence with care and sound judgment. All this might have led to an unpretentious but satisfying biography, had not some demon in an evil hour whispered to Mr. Edwards, "have a Taste"—in other words, "write a book for the general reader." Unfortunately, there is not the material for this kind of book about Skelton. The 'Life and Times' in its more successful examples (such as Villari's books on Savonarola and Machiavelli) is a leisurely nineteenth-century genre. Mr. Edwards has not enough space to deal broadly with the 'Times': hence what we get interpolated into the narrative of Skelton's own career is the result of a series of detailed investigations into the family histories of those with whom Skelton came into contact, with the appropriate scholarly supplement in the Appendix (e.g. *The Ladies of the Garland*, (1) *A Tilney Pedigree*). The account of the more public setting of Skelton's career—the doings of Wolsey and Henry VIII—is necessarily summary and episodic. On Skelton himself, unsuccessful attempts are made to enliven confessions of the inadequacy of the evidence by presenting them in the form of rhetorical questions: "Was it his chaplain, John Blythe, that he [Henry VII] discussed the matter with one day? And did Blythe remember a quick confident youngster at Cambridge who had shown a singular knack at englishing his Tully? Did he remind Henry of this talented youth, who had been laureated at Oxford that very year—perhaps by the King in person?"

All this would not be worth saying if this were a piece of shoddy pseudo-picturesque book-making. It is because it is, when all objections to manner and presentation have been made, the fullest and most reliable survey of Skelton that has appeared that one is forced to deplore Mr. Edwards's initial decision. What he has tried to write is the kind of book which only a handful of scholars in a generation can succeed with. One of the few who have succeeded in recent times is R. W. Chambers, and the publishers invite us to compare this book with his *Thomas More*. But Chambers had the advantage in his choice of a subject no less than in literary skill, and Mr. Edwards just does not begin to compete.

On the biographical detail, in which the value of the book resides, it would require a specialist to comment; and Mr. Edwards refrains from literary criticism, though not from some fairly close exegesis. On

the vexed topics of Humanism and Renaissance he does not go very deep, and brief though his introductory discussion of these is (fourteen pages), he apologizes for it as "long and—inevitably—dullish": one cannot but wonder what sort of animal the "general reader" is, who will not stomach even that much on the intellectual milieu, but is expected to plunge with gusto into the unravelling of the obscurest allusions in "Speak, Parrot." Altogether, there is a lack of imaginative sympathy with the literary theory of the time. Mr. Edwards might have considered more deeply the dictum of C. S. Lewis, which arises out of consideration of the rhetorical tradition of Geoffroi de Vinsauf (dismissed by Mr. Edwards, in passing, as pernicious): "to be indulgent to mere fashion in other periods, and merciless to it in our own, is the first step we can make out of the prison of the *zeitgeist*" (*Allegory of Love*, pp. 89-90).

A couple of more minute considerations: the form "*Reginae Orator*," which according to Mr. Edwards (p. 143), "no one (except Dyce) seems to have noticed," was noticed also by A. F. Pollard, *E.H.R.*, 1940, p. 127, in the course of an important review of W. Nelson's book on Skelton; and to say (p. 234) that Phaedra was guilty of incest is a libel on Hippolytus!

It would have been pleasant to be able to welcome this book more whole-heartedly. Mr. Edwards is engaged on a (much-needed) edition of Skelton. Let him there give us a biographical introduction bringing together the material he knows so well, without any literary airs and graces, or padding. The half will be more than the whole.

J. C. MAXWELL

#### MR. MOORE AND MR. NICHOLSON

*Henry Moore, Sculpture and Drawings*, with an Introduction by Herbert Read (Lund Humphries and A. Zwemmer 63s).

*Ben Nicholson, Paintings, Reliefs, Drawings*, with an Introduction by Herbert Read (Lund Humphries 63s).

IN the October issue of *THE MONTH* I had occasion to deplore the meagreness of serious writing on English art. Of the painters and sculptors of our own time and country less than a handful have been the subjects of authoritative biographies. The work of a few more has been commemorated in volumes of illustrations for which no claim to be fully representative, much less exhaustive, could fairly be made. A possible exception is the full and careful but too pious *Paul Nash* for which Messrs. Lund Humphries were also responsible. It is therefore a pleasure to welcome the volumes on the work of Mr. Moore

and Mr. Nicholson. Both are model productions: scholarly, elegant and complete. The *Moore* was first published in 1944, and reissued two years later. The present edition is revised and greatly enlarged. In fact virtually the whole of Mr. Moore's work is reproduced in a series of 450 plates: with very few exceptions, every piece of sculpture and a large selection of his drawings. His principal writings on sculpture are also included, and there is an exhaustive bibliography. The *Nicholson*, illustrated by 200 plates, 40 in colour, and enlivened by the artist's own notes on abstract art, was published in 1948. The quality and arrangement of the reproductions make both books a delight to the eye.

These two volumes enable anyone interested in the work of Mr. Moore and Mr. Nicholson to gain a comprehensive and intimate knowledge of it; and anybody interested in contemporary art would be likely to find both of high importance. Mr. Moore has emerged as one of the most notable figures active in the whole field of art. No English artist since Lawrence has enjoyed, in his own lifetime, so great a measure of honour abroad; but while the reputation of Lawrence derived largely from the admiration of Emperors, that of Mr. Moore is based chiefly upon that of his fellow artists. He has become a figure of international importance. It has happened, occasionally, to the present writer, that at a public function a representative of a foreign Power has shown a flattering disposition for a confidential talk. In pleasurable anticipation of a glimpse behind the diplomatic scene he has inclined an attentive head. "I suppose there is no chance," the high dignitary has said, "of our having an exhibition of Henry Moore. My government would appreciate anything you could do . . ."

Mr. Nicholson stands out as the most consistent and most accomplished English exponent of abstraction, perhaps the most characteristic art movement of our time.

Mr. Read's introductory essays are serious and closely reasoned, but his contention that all sculpture between the Renaissance and our own time was vitiated by naturalism to the point of degeneracy, and that contemporary sculptors have returned to a great basic tradition which embraces the Aztecs, the Etruscans, and the primitive peoples, is surely an egregious simplification. How startlingly, how almost shockingly, the terrifying, purposeful images called into existence by primitive religions differed from the manifestations, languid and capricious, of contemporary eclecticism was everywhere evident in the exhibition, held in 1948, of "40,000 Years of Modern Art."

But the doubtful basis of the introduction to one of these books should deter no one from studying both these exemplary productions which are the equal of anything of the kind published anywhere.

JOHN ROTHENSTEIN

## THEISM AND THE INTERPRETATION OF ATHEISM

*The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, by Henri de Lubac, S.J. (Sheed and Ward 155).

DOES it perhaps take the passion of an utterly committed and self-surrendered theist to understand and interpret the opposite yet in some sense parallel passion of the vehement atheist? The two have in common the same all-absorbing concern with God, the same intuitive divination that man's response to the call and challenge of God is the central and crucial theme of his existence. As against the various superficial poses which purport to provide men with a philosophy of existence which can be had without passion or tears—secularism, positivism, utilitarianism and the rest—the theist and the atheist share a vivid sense of the depth and eternal moment of the unique experience of being human. There is a comradeship between these two deep-sea swimmers which neither can ever attain with the cautious paddlers and splashers in the shallows.

Père de Lubac not so very long ago gave us a loving—in the literal sense “charitable”—and enthusiastic study of Proudhon, the man who said that God was evil, in *The Unmarxian Socialist*. This book at least made it clear that a Jesuit may understand an atheist, love him more sincerely and do him more justice than another atheist even, for Proudhon was the unfortunate subject of one of the most bitter, unfair and uncharitable books that Marx ever wrote. Père de Lubac brings the same intellectual charity and insight into the present more general study. But even in this general study he sticks to his personal and dramatic method of treating the subject. This is not a theoretical analysis of the idea of atheism, but an inductive study of atheism as a human state of mind revealed in the contrasted careers of four celebrated atheists—Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche and Comte. No doubt the selection is somewhat subjective, and liable to a certain amount of criticism. In particular, the book might have gained in weight if the author had not confined his attention to the atheism of the nineteenth century. It would not only have been more complete from the formal point of view, but also wider and profounder in its existential range and scope if he had also taken into consideration the atheism of the classical world, the renaissance and the “enlightenment.” Again, the amount of space accorded to his concrete “cases” differs enormously. Thus Marx has only a few pages, whereas there is an elaborate exposition and portrait of Comte—surely the best critical account of him to be found anywhere—which occupies nearly a third of the whole. This selective distribution of attention and concentration puts the book into the category of the sparkling literary essay, abounding with stimulating suggestions and flashes of insight, rather than into that of



the systematic philosophical treatise. But, that said, carping criticism is done. For, in its own category, what an excellent book this is!

As a foil to his portrait gallery of "splendid" nineteenth-century atheists, and for good measure too, Père de Lubac gives us some brief reflections on Kierkegaard's existential theism and a much longer account of the profound diagnosis of atheism embedded in the novels of Dostoevsky. The contrast is sketched and conveyed with a sure hand, but without obscuring the fundamental intellectual and spiritual parallelism of atheism and theism. Yet the writer nowhere ventures upon a really precise diagnosis of this paradoxical kinship and resemblance between two dialectical opposites which he sees and illustrates so clearly.

In the opinion of the present reviewer the essential clue is in the title. Atheism is indeed a sort of humanism, a humanism which values man not for what he now is—it is usually in frenzied rebellion against that—but for what, evolving painfully through time, he is at last to become. The present struggle within man is interpreted as the birth pangs of the superman of the future. For Christian theism this same struggle is interpreted as the ageless discontent of a being who through sin has fallen short of his own proper stature. These are the pangs not of birth but of rebirth. The Christian values man not in terms of a pseudo-evolutionary myth of some future transcendence of his present nature, but in a theological vision of an eternal perfection of his present nature by the redeeming grace of God. These two attitudes are fundamentally opposed and yet intellectually parallel and akin. Both recognize the tragic disparity between man as a phenomenon of contemporary and past history and man as humanism sees and values him. It is always man beyond the range of our present vision who is for the humanist the true man, heroic man in a golden future or man forgiven and redeemed in the Kingdom of God, never common man shouting at the boxing match or standing drearily in a queue, economic man prospering in one of the world's "cities," intellectual and artistic man smugly congratulating himself in one of the world's Bloomsburys, political man conjuring empire out of his obscene compound of blood and welfare, sadistic man organizing a concentration camp with a maximum of efficiency and mortality—although for the Christian these men also are the objects of the Divine Love. Yet these two parallel humanisms prompt dialectically opposed metaphysical convictions. According to Kierkegaard man without God cannot be really man. For Nietzsche it is only without God that man can become superman. Only if there is no God can man become God. It is the bias of their humanisms which determines the direction of their metaphysics.

Historically the debate between theists and atheists has taken the

form of a metaphysical examination of the doctrine of God. Might it not be more profitable explicitly to transform this ancient controversy into a search for the hidden foundations of humanism, an inquiry which asks primarily what it means to be a man, and why it matters? It is a philosophy of man and human worth which interprets God as the enemy of legitimate human aspiration which provides the real driving force behind the tendency of so many of the more "heroic" humanists to slide into atheism. For the genuine and often self-forgetful passion of the atheist—and here Père de Lubac would certainly agree with his present reviewer—indicates that at bottom atheism is no mere speculative denial of the Divine Existence, but a passionate rebellion against the Divine Government of what is taken to be man's world.

J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY

### CATHOLICS AND ANGLICANS

*Anglicans et Catholiques: le Problème de l'Union Anglo-Romaine*, by Jacques de Bivort de La Saudée (Plon 120 fr).

THE sub-title of this work is misleading. By page 43 we have already reached 1920, and then two-thirds of the book is devoted to the Conversations of Malines which closed in 1926. It is these then which form the core of the book, and the author has been able to draw on the papers of Lord Halifax, of Cardinal Mercier and of Mgr. Batiffol in order to give colour and detail to the composite picture which he could already put together from the published accounts. In doing so he has included from private letters the sort of snap judgements which any of us might indulge in when writing to friends—and opinions may differ as to the propriety of giving publicity to such "personalities." But on the whole his account of the Conversations is objective, hiding nothing of the snags encountered, sympathetic and (save for the appalling mis-spellings of English names) eminently readable. We have not at hand the companion volume (consisting entirely of documentation, 1921-1927): our remarks can be an appraisal of the present work alone.

If there is one thing that stands out, it is the good faith and the charity of the protagonists, as of the author who sponsors their cause. Nor need Catholics, here in England, take umbrage at reminders of the need of sympathy and understanding towards their separated brethren—even when these reminders come from abroad. And when others exercise these Christian virtues, we can rejoice in the Lord, even though their exercise is not always quite *secundum scientiam*. But, after all, good faith and charity by themselves are not enough. There are

hard facts too, and it may be part of charity not to overlook them. Lord Halifax, for all his sterling qualities, lived in a dream-world of his own, and if we do need vision to do any good work, it must be a vision of the whole. It is no good deluding oneself. The Anglican *proromains*, as they are here called, have done yeoman service in the cause of religion in this country by their stand for objective dogma (and even for authority at times) against the inroads of a dominant subjectivism, but they have been and remain all too few, and others are doing as much who are anything but *proromain*.

The crux of the matter has been well put by Père Congar: "De fait, l'Église recherche ou admet dans certaines conditions des réunions en corps; mais c'est qu'il s'agit là de véritables corps ecclésiastiques homogènes, et dont l'homogénéité tient précisément à ceci que la foi y a une règle et un statut proprement ecclésiastiques. Or tel n'est pas en toute vérité le cas de l'Église anglicane. . . . Quand on lit de près leurs déclarations, les catholiques anglais qui rejettent l'idée de réunion en corps ne s'appuient pas sur d'autres raisons" (*Chrétiens désunis*, pp. 377-8). It is a pity that Père de Bivort, who can quote his Congar, missed this passage: it would have saved him from certain *naïvetés*. He might have been helped, too, by Congar's remark that, despite Aristotle, the way from the Piraeus to Athens is not the same as the way from Athens to the Piraeus: "car autre chose est de rompre avec l'Église unie, autre chose de réintégrer dans l'unité un corps dispersé et inégal" (p. 378).

Perhaps some Anglicans will find comfort and encouragement from this book; but we are inclined to think that most of them will be loath to quote it seriously: it contributes nothing substantial to the situation—of which it shows really only a superficial understanding—and it is marred by a partisanship and lack of discretion which will be distasteful also to those whose cause the author has most at heart.

MAURICE BÉVENOT

# THOMAS GILBY

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